Tuesday 16 September 2025

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Fujifilm X-E5

Small and gorgeous, but does the performance live up to the looks?

Capturing giants

Inside the world of pro whale photographer **Ted Lamb**

Viltrox 85mm F1.4

The firm's first full-frame Pro AF lens is a surprise bargain

Buried in style

Photographing Ghana's vibrant funeral culture

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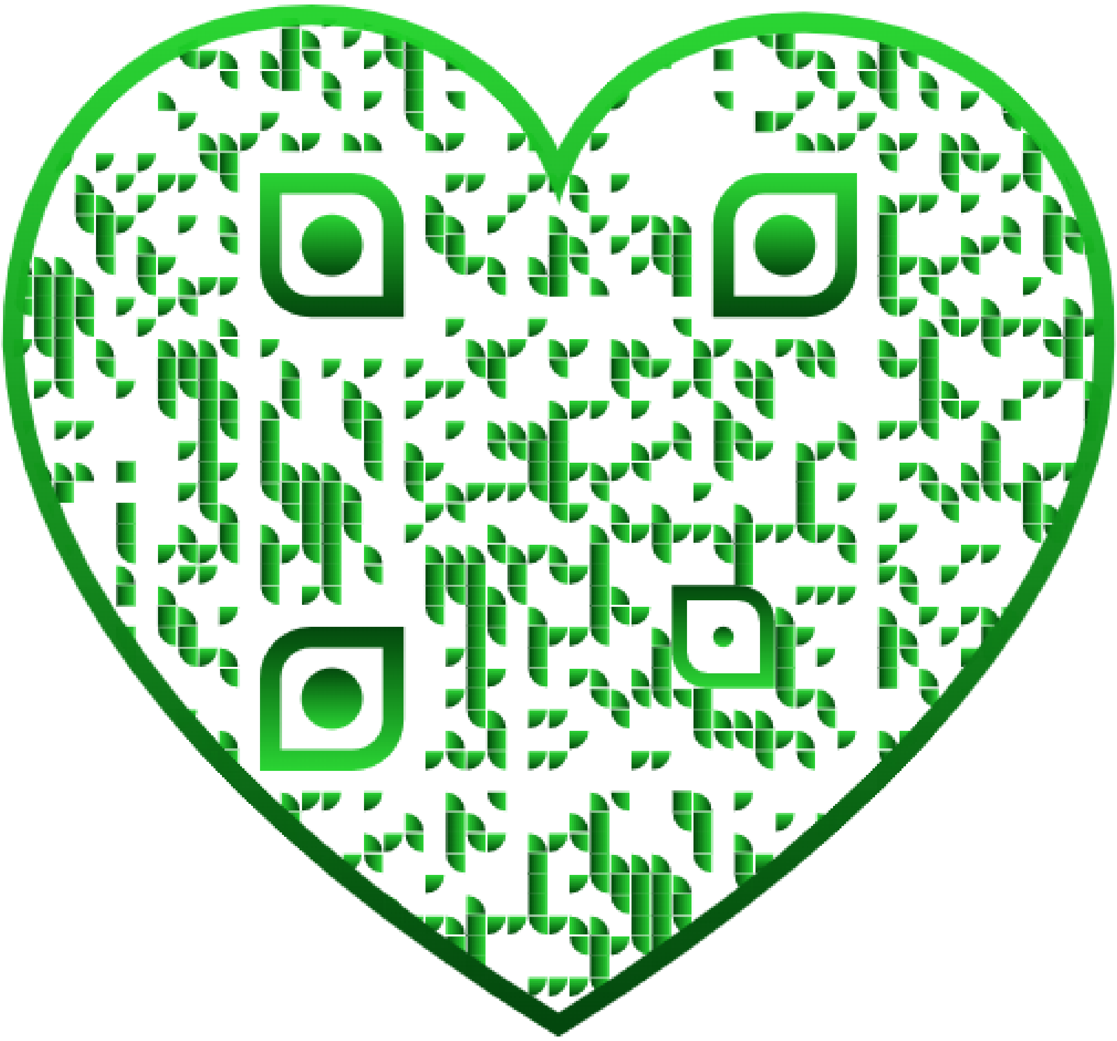
Plus Benro GD36PT 3-way geared head on test • Iceland's frozen landscapes



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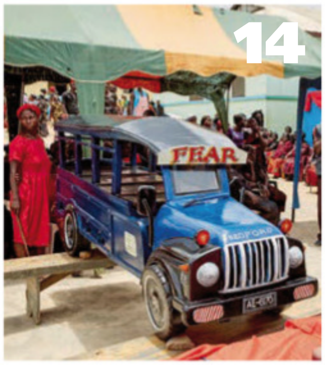
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© PATRICK LEFÈVRE (FROM VETUR: FROZEN LANDSCAPES OF ICELAND)

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Welcome

What a diverse issue we have for you this week. First up we test what must surely be the most beautiful camera of the year, the Fujifilm X-E5. It's a stunning performer too. Read our review and prepare to want one. Also this week we share Regula Tschumi's work documenting Ghana's amazing funeral culture, which features the most wonderful custom-made coffins. Such a contrast to our traditionally dour, colourless send-offs! Her fabulous book is top of my Christmas wishlist. We also talk to Ted Lamb who is anything but sheepish when it comes to talking about his job photographing whales off the coast of Australia. One of his spectacular images graces this week's cover.

Nigel Atherton, Editor

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MAIN COVER PICTURE © TED LAMB. COVER INSET PICTURE, BOTTOM LEFT © REGULA TSCHUMI

Our cover image is by Ted Lamb. Read our interview with him on page 22.

THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

ANDY WESTLAKE
Technical Editor

Our resident chief reviewer conducts our big test of the impressive new Fujifilm X-E5

PETER DENCH
Acting Features Ed

Peter speaks to social anthropologist Regula Tschumi about her intriguing book, *Buried in Style*

TED LAMB

Accomplished photographer Ted Lamb shares the thrill of whale watching, and the challenges of photographing them

ANGELA NICHOLSON

Expert tester and former AP technical editor Angela reviews the Viltrox AF 85mm F1.4 Pro FE full-frame portrait lens

AILSA MCWHINNIE

APOY 2025 project manager Ailsa shares details for entering Round 6 of our prestigious APOY photo competition

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The OM System 50-200mm F2.8 IS Pro, which is built for Micro Four Thirds cameras

Pro-spec OM System telephoto zoom

OM SYSTEM has introduced a new, large-aperture professional telephoto zoom. The OM System M.Zuiko Digital ED 50-200mm F2.8 IS Pro, to give it its full, tortuous name, is built for Micro Four Thirds cameras, on which it provides a 100-400mm equivalent range.

It also boasts optical image stabilisation and compatibility with teleconverters for even longer reach. It should be attractive to photographers shooting distant subjects such as wildlife and sports.

Optically, the lens uses 21 elements in 13 groups, with plenty of exotic glass employed to maximise edge-to-edge sharpness and minimise colour fringing. Like all the firm's Pro-series glass, it's sealed against dust and water with an IP53 rating, and is freezeproof to -10°C. Both zooming and focusing are internal.

The optical stabilisation system is rated for up to 7 stops of shake reduction, when used on the OM-1 Mark II camera. Close-up shooting is available too, with a minimum focus distance of just 78cm giving 0.5x equivalent magnification. Physically, the lens is 225.8mm long and weighs 1,250g with its removable tripod mount, which features an Arca-Swiss shoe. It's set to be available from 6 October for £2,999.

Nikon reveals high-end cine camera at a bargain price

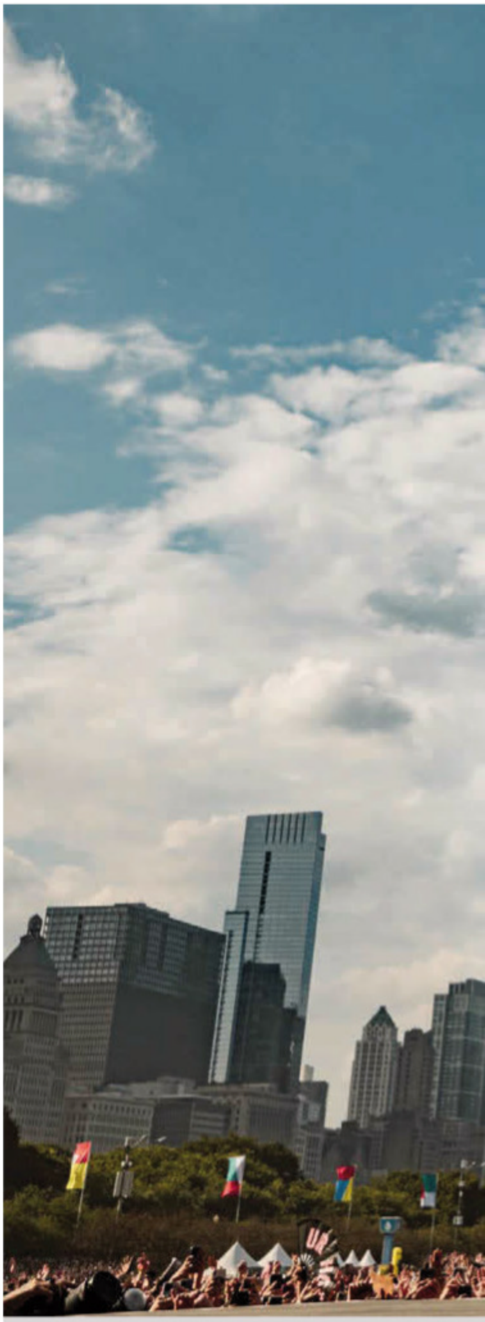
The Nikon ZR will be out in October

NIKON has revealed the first camera to come out of its acquisition of pro cine camera maker RED. The Nikon ZR is a compact-bodied full-frame camera that's designed to be used hand-held without any additional rig. Raw video can be recorded internally at up to 6K 60p in 12-bit colour using the R3D NE raw format, which is claimed to deliver 15+ stops of dynamic range. Nikon is also promising high-quality sound via Nokia OZO Audio technology, supported by internal 32-bit float recording. On the back, there's a 4in, 3.07m-dot screen.

Nikon has built the ZR using the same 24MP partially-stacked CMOS sensor as the Z6III. The camera also employs the same proven autofocus system, including subject detection for nine different kinds of subject. It has 5-axis in-body image stabilisation built-in, too.

The ZR also incorporates RED's colour science, with LUT support to visualise colour output, and Cinematic Presets for those who require finished footage out-of-camera. Nikon is claiming continuous recording times up to 125 minutes, with a fanless heat dissipation pathway that enables silent operation and weather-sealed construction.

All this technology comes at a startlingly low price, with the Nikon ZR set to cost just £2,199 body-only when it goes on sale at the end of October.



© JOSH DRUDING (JOSH DRUDING.COM)

Winning with Roan?

JOSH Druding's striking live shot of US singer/songwriter Chappell Roan is amongst the nominees for this year's Abbey Road Music Photography Awards. Over 20,000 images were submitted this year, from 30 countries. Two new categories were introduced for 2025 – Portrait and Festivals, and Club Culture (which celebrates images taken in any year). The winners will be announced on 2 October and you have until 23 September to vote in the Music Moment of the Year open award – simply visit bit.ly/abbeyvote

Chappell Roan by Josh Druding – one of the nominees for the Abbey Road Music Photography Awards

New 3LT Axis straps on Kickstarter

ACCESSORY firm 3 Legged Thing has launched a new system of British-made camera straps on Kickstarter. They're based on the Quick Detach Swivel connector that was originally developed for police and military use. All the straps plug into a plate or L-bracket that screws into your camera's tripod socket. The system includes three neck/shoulder-cross body straps of different widths; a wrist strap; a short strap that's designed to clip onto a backpack; and a pair of sling straps for one or two cameras. The Kickstarter campaign runs until 9 October 2025. For more details, visit bit.ly/46fwei0

The 3LT camera strap system is called Axis

New Premiere video-editing app for iPhone

ADOBE has announced that a new Premiere iPhone app is now available to preorder through the Apple App Store. The full release is expected on 30 September. As you'd expect from Adobe, Artificial Intelligence is to the fore. You can use Generative AI to extend or replace backgrounds, for example, or use AI Enhance Speech for more professional-sounding voice recordings and voiceovers. There is also unlimited video, audio and text-layer editing, automatic captioning, 4K HDR support and one-tap uploading to popular social media platforms. An Android version is under development.

The new app for iPhone aims to improve your videos

Premium portrait lens for Canon users

The RF 85mm F1.4L VCM

CANON has introduced a new large-aperture short-telephoto lens for its RF system, the RF 85mm F1.4L VCM. It's a pro-spec lens for portrait and wedding photographers, which is designed for both photo and video use. It employs the same physical design as the company's other f/1.4 RF primes, with the set now including five focal lengths: 20mm, 24mm, 35mm, 50mm, and 85mm.

The new RF 85mm F1.4 slots into Canon's lineup in between the huge and expensive RF 85mm F1.2L USM (£2,699) and the budget-friendly RF 85mm F2 Macro IS STM (£549). Measuring 99.3 x 76.5mm and weighing in at 636g, it's only about half the weight of its f/1.2 sibling. Like the other f/1.4 primes, it takes 67mm filters.

Other features of note include a 14-element, 10-group optical design that's designed for high quality across the entire image area, and an aperture with 11 rounded blades. Canon is promising quiet, fast and precise autofocus thanks to the Voice Coil Motor (VCM), with a minimum focus distance of 75mm. The barrel includes both a control dial and a dedicated aperture ring, and it also boasts a weather-resistant construction.

The lens is due to go on sale on 30 September for £1,679.99.

Canon EOS C50 targets pro video market

CANON has also announced a new Cinema EOS camera for pro videographers and production companies. Described as a video-first hybrid, the EOS C50 employs a brand-new 32MP full-frame sensor that enables 7K 60p internal raw recording. Thanks to an all-new body design measuring 142x88x95mm and weighing 670g, it's the smallest and lightest Cinema EOS yet. It does without a viewfinder and mechanical shutter, but it includes active cooling for extended recording times.

The firm has packed in plenty of high-end video features, including Canon Log2/3 support and open-gate recording. High-frame recording is available at up to 120fps in 4K, and 180fps in Full HD. A modular top handle with XLR microphone inputs comes in the box as standard. The control layout is optimised for video, with no fewer than three record buttons arranged around the body. There's also a dual menu system, with separate interfaces optimised for video and stills.

Canon's Dual Pixel CMOS AF II is on board for accurate autofocus anywhere in the frame, including subject detection and tracking. Photography features include continuous shooting at 40fps, with pre-burst shooting available for unpredictable subjects.

The Canon EOS C50 is set to cost £3,359.99 when it goes on sale at the start of November.

The Canon EOS C50 offers high-end video features

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Left: The new 135mm lens, featuring a maximum aperture of f/1.4

Sigma's 35mm F1.2 DG II | Art is the fastest lens of the trio

New Sigma lens trio lands

SIGMA has announced three new lenses – two primes and a zoom – as the latest additions to its Art and Contemporary series. All are for L mount and Sony E-mount.

First up is the Sigma 35mm F1.2 DG II | Art, the successor to the company's 35mm F1.2 DG DN | Art. As well as offering an improved optical performance, this fast lens is around 30% lighter and 20% shorter than its predecessor, measuring 81 x 111.4mm and weighing in at 755g. This has been made possible by the adoption of a floating focus design, enabling the lens groups to move independently of each other while maintaining high optical standards. Additionally, the improved optical design features 4 aspherical lens elements and thinner lens elements. Fast and quiet autofocus is achieved by a dual HLA (High-response Linear Actuator) system, which drives each of the two focus groups by an individual linear motor. In addition to a dust- and splash-resistant structure, the lens's front element also features a water- and oil-repellent coating. It goes on sale on 25 September for £1,299.

Sigma's other new prime is the 135mm F1.4 DG | Art, claimed to be the world's first 135mm autofocus lens to achieve a maximum aperture of f/1.4. Sigma notes that the circular bokeh produced by the 13-blade diaphragm is larger than that of the 105mm F1.4 DG HSM | Art and is comparable to that of the firm's 200mm F2 DG OS | Sports. Four large FLD glass elements suppress chromatic aberration, along with high-dispersion glass elements. The lens has a dual HLA system for fast AF, a dust- and splash-resistant structure, and is available on 25 September for £1,649.

Compact zoom

Last up is the 20-200mm F3.5-6.3 DG | Contemporary. Sigma claims this all-rounder is the world's first 10x zoom starting at a wide 20mm, making it particularly attractive to landscape, sports and travel photographers. Also, it achieves a maximum magnification ratio of 1:2 from 28mm to 85mm, enabling photographers to enjoy a broad range of half-macro photography with different angles of view. Compact and portable, it weighs 550g, is just 115.5mm long and has a zoom ring diameter of 70.4mm. It features an HLA system for fast AF, a dust- and splash-resistant structure and a zoom lock switch that can be fixed at the wide end. It's again available from 25 September, this time for £799.

Sigma also announced a versatile new zoom lens

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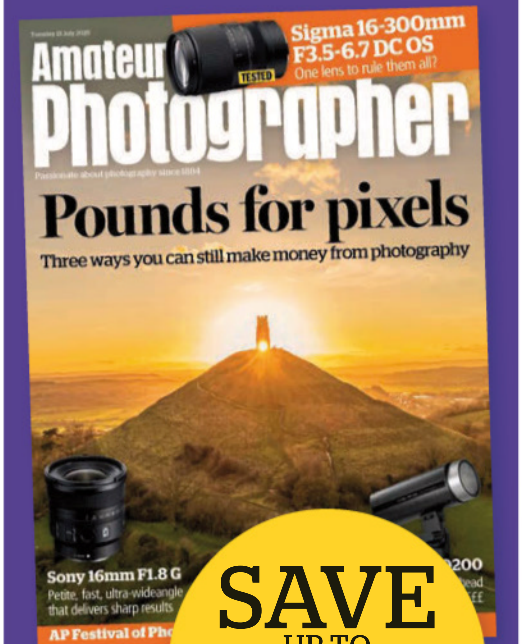
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ALL PICTURES © PATRICK LEFÈVRE

Vetur: Frozen Landscapes of Iceland

by Patrick Lefèvre

€48, KehrerVerlag, hardback, 120 pages, ISBN: 9783969001905

A poetic meditation on Iceland's winter soul – serene, stark and spellbinding, says **Peter Dench**

In *Vetur*, Belgian photographer Patrick Lefèvre sets out across Iceland's winter terrain and returns with a body of work that is as serene as it is severe. Shot during his first visit to the country in February 2024, Lefèvre's images are not about grandeur or spectacle, but rather a quiet reckoning with space, light and solitude. The title, *Vetur* – Icelandic for 'winter' – sets the tone for this visual meditation.

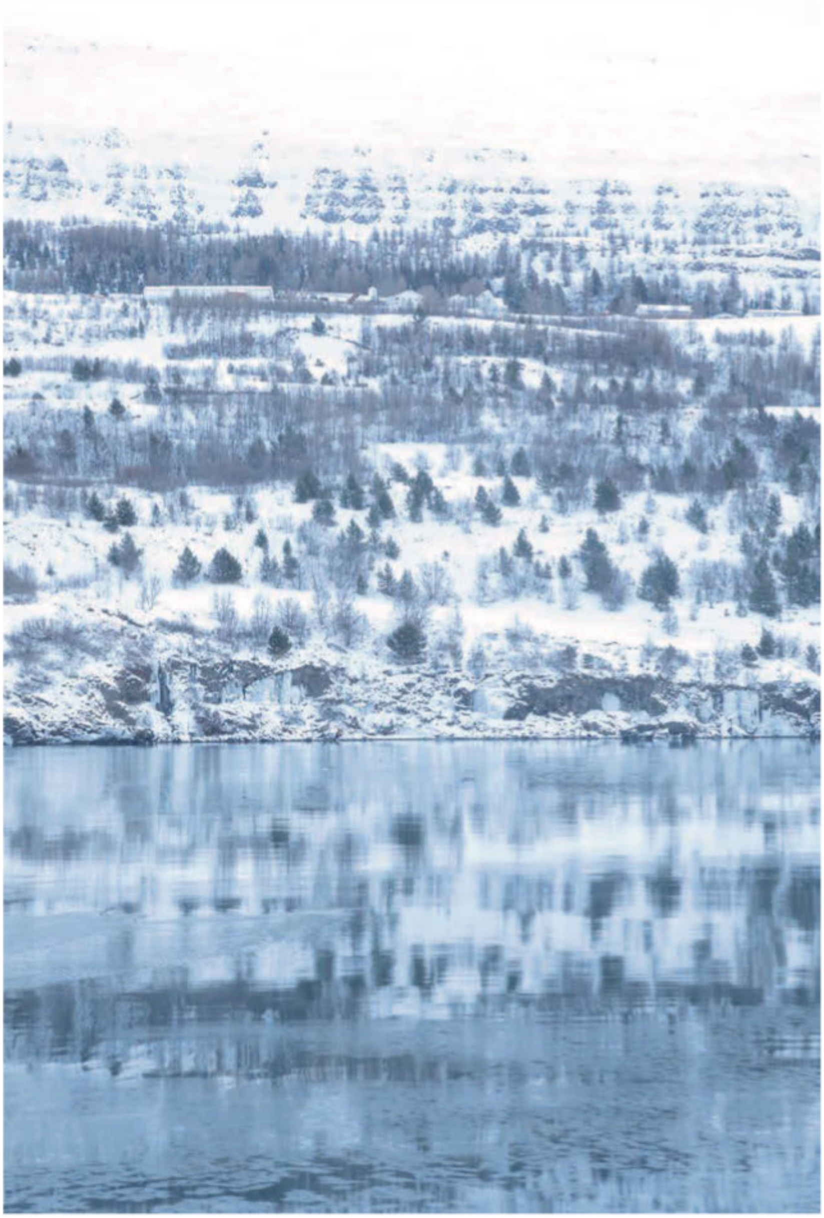
The 120-page book offers a journey through snowbound stillness and glacial silence. Roads become lifelines threading across vast white expanses; horizons vanish into fog or flare with fleeting light. Lefèvre's Iceland is shaped by the mutable nature of winter itself, where weather and light shift within moments – transforming desolation into magic.

While the photographs range across iconic sites such as the Katla volcano and Dettifoss waterfall, as well as lesser-known stretches of the Snæfellsnes and Reykjanes peninsulas, Lefèvre resists the pull of postcard clichés. Instead, he pares the land down to its elemental core: a single stone, a lone tree, a ribbon of asphalt disappearing into light. These are not documentary records, but visual haikus – rich with stillness, space and suggestion.

Echoing the aesthetics of Pictorialism, the work has a painterly softness and minimalist precision. The compositions are deliberately sparse, the colour palette restrained, leaning into the introspective qualities of Iceland's frozen landscape. Each image feels like a quiet pause, inviting the viewer to slow down and enter a more contemplative state.

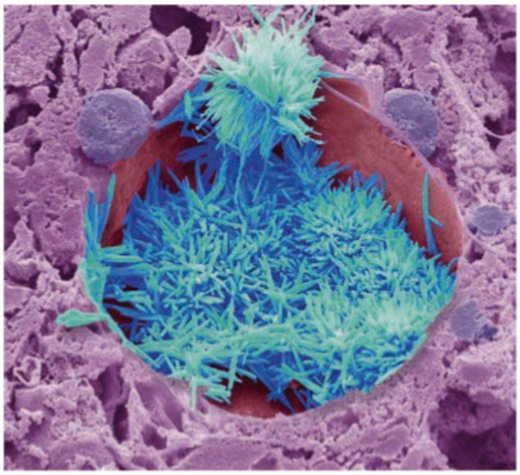
Designed by Laura Pecoroni of Kehrer Design, the book itself is elegant and understated – letting the images breathe. With 74 colour illustrations, *Vetur* is less a travelogue than a poetic encounter, a search for simplicity and connection in a world increasingly crowded with noise.

For those drawn to the intersection of nature, solitude and photographic art, *Vetur* is a compelling and quietly powerful addition to the shelf.



Books & exhibitions

The latest and best books and exhibitions from the world of photography



COURTESY OF WELLCOME PHOTOGRAPHY PRIZE 2025

Cholesterol in the liver, 2022, by Steve Gschmeissner

Wellcome Photography Prize 2025 – Health, Science and Humanity in Focus

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Now in its 28th year, the Wellcome Photography Prize returns with a strikingly diverse shortlist, drawn from over 100 countries. This year marks the revival of the Biomedical Imaging category and reinforces the prize's mission: to make health and science visible – emotionally, socially and microscopically.

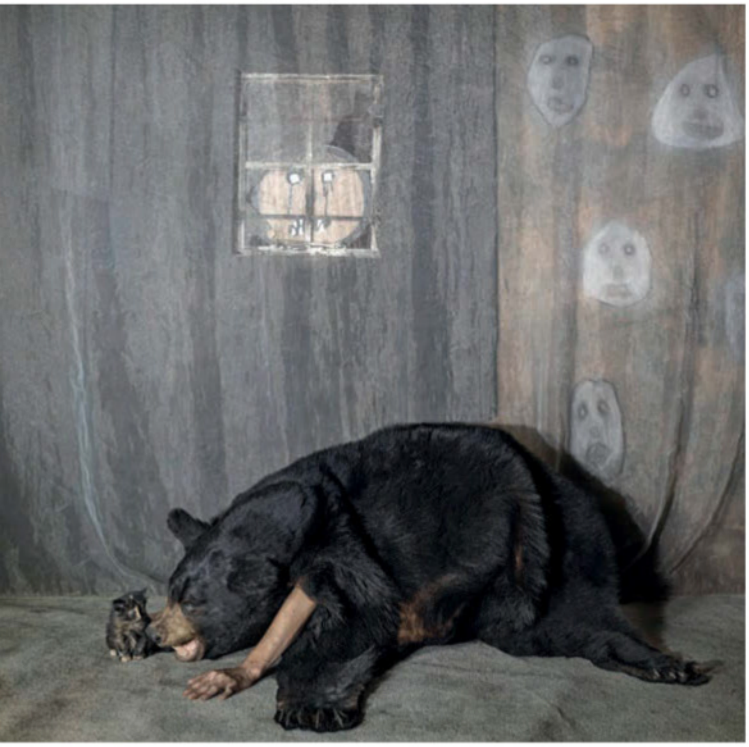
Winners Sujata Setia, Mithail Afrige Chowdhury and Steve Gschmeissner each receive £10,000 for images exploring domestic abuse, climate migration and cholesterol's hidden dangers.

What sets the 2025 selection apart is its scale. From drone footage of Peruvian glacial runoff to the first non-invasive image of microplastics in living tissue, the works span vast landscapes and cellular interiors. Georgie Wileman confronts endometriosis; Nancy Borowick documents mothers coping with stillbirth; Oded Wagenstein's Transparent Curtains captures quiet queer grief in an Israeli care home. The biomedical category dazzles in a different register – cholesterol crystals, butterfly brains – where data becomes wonder and research verges on visual poetry.

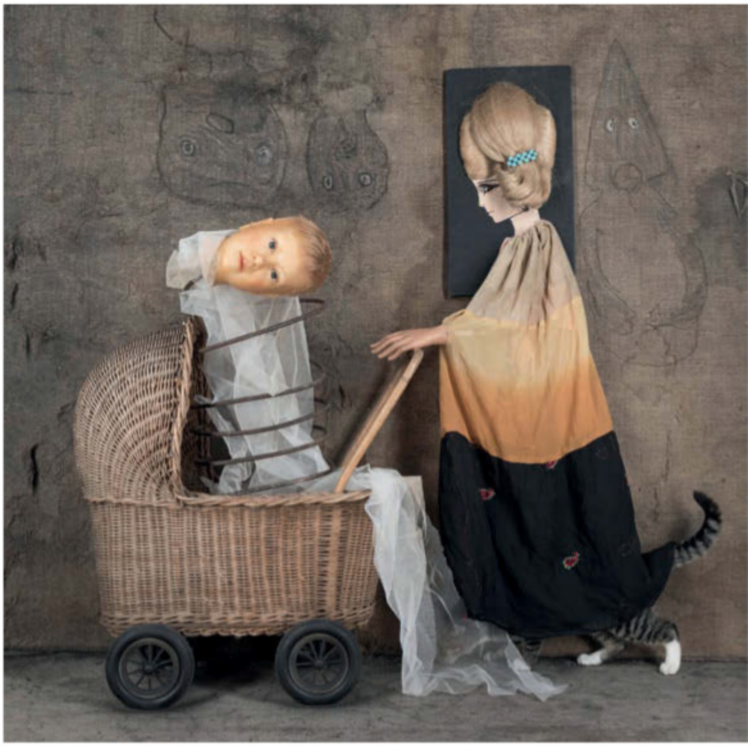
The climate crisis features heavily. Whether it's subaquatic farming in Italy or a rooftop picnic in Dhaka, these images reflect human adaptability under environmental duress.

Alongside the top 25, the exhibition includes Things We Left Unseen, a collaborative project with young people from Khayelitsha, South Africa – offering unfiltered insight into everyday health and resilience.

Curated by Laurie Britton Newell and Ligaya Salazar, the 2025 Wellcome Photography Prize is both a call to see and a call to care.



Curious Cat 2023



Follower 2018

Spirits and Spaces
by Roger Ballen

£40, Thames & Hudson, hardback, 144 pages, ISBN: 9780500028926

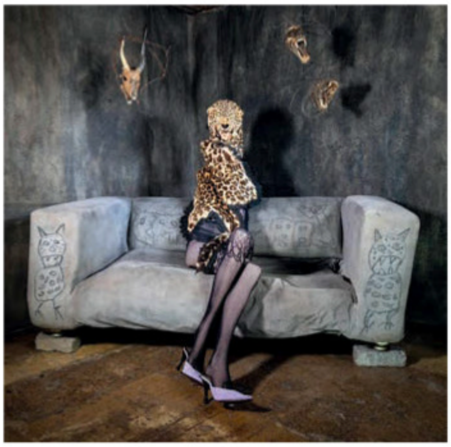
In *Spirits and Spaces*, Roger Ballen – long known for his stark black & white psychological tableaux – plunges headfirst into colour, with typically disorienting results. It's his first monograph to explore this new dimension, and it's every bit as bizarre, claustrophobic and unsettling as you might expect from the mind behind *Asylum of the Birds* and *The Theatre of Apparitions*.

The shift began in 2016, when Ballen received a Leica SL as a gift. For an artist whose visual universe has always been defined by graphic shadows and haunted greys, colour wasn't just a technical change – it was a philosophical one. In *Spirits and Spaces*, colour doesn't soften Ballen's world, it heightens its absurdity. Flesh tones become garish. Murky yellows and decaying pinks seep through wooden-panelled walls. The effect is not documentary realism, but something closer to a fever dream.

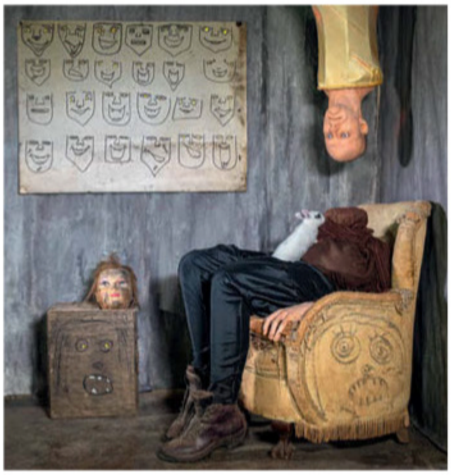
Working in collaboration with artistic director Marguerite Rossouw, Ballen built a low-lit, almost theatrical space – crumbling, wallpapered, intimate, oppressive. Within it, the familiar elements of his universe appear: crude wall drawings, strange props, fragmented bodies and animals that seem both living and symbolic. The results are a theatre of the disturbed and the disturbing. It's the Ballenesque in colour – an unsettling evolution of an already singular vision.

This is not simply a shift in palette but in perception. The colour photographs intensify the grotesque humour and tragic absurdity Ballen has always pursued. They allow more psychological ambiguity to seep into the frame – adding depth without diluting impact. Like stepping into a nightmare painted in ochre and crimson, the images unsettle more precisely because of their beauty.

With 91 illustrations and an introduction by Colin Rhodes, *Spirits and Spaces* is both a continuation and an expansion of Ballen's extraordinary body of work. This is the world through Ballen's eyes – strange, sad, hilarious and, somehow, true.

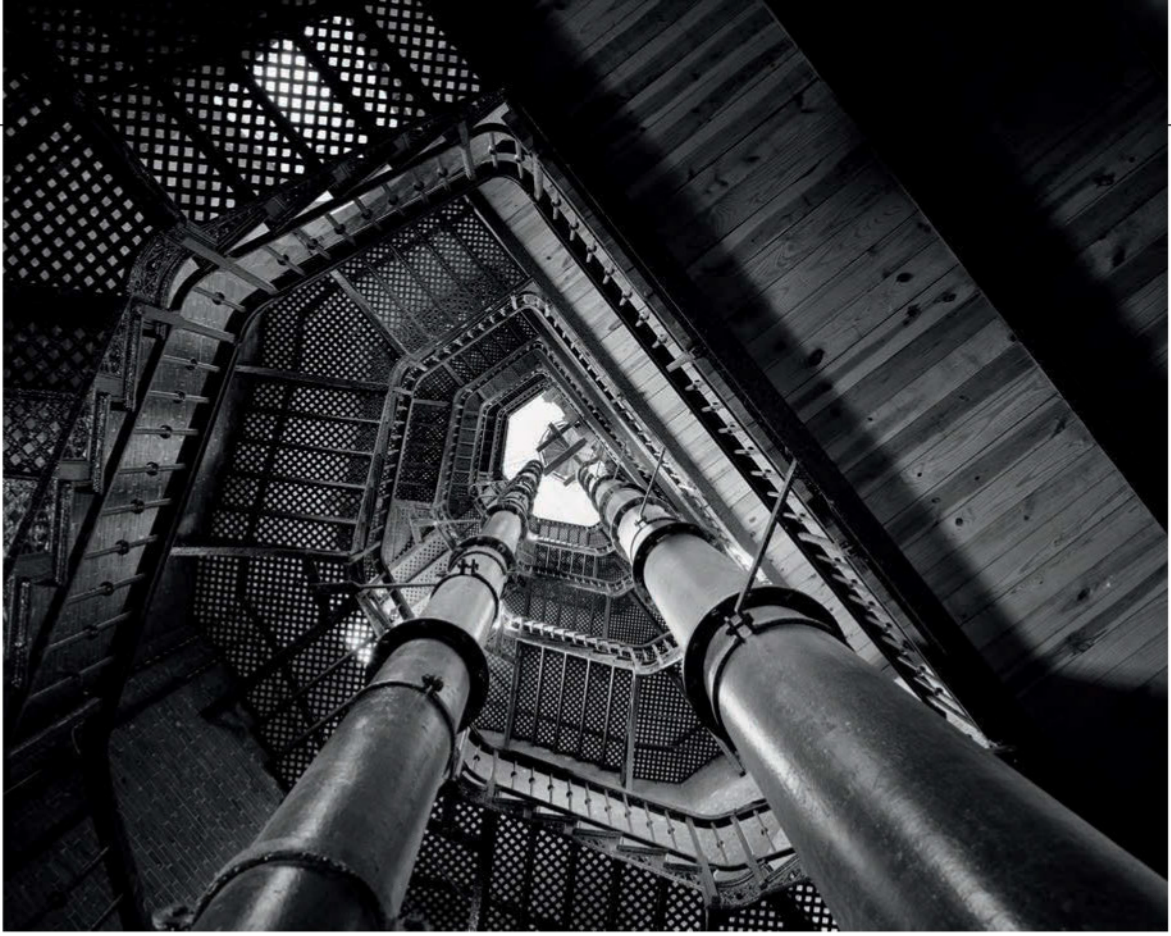


Leopard Lady 2019



Perplexed 2019

ALL PICTURES: © STANLEY GREENBERG / KRIS GRAVES PROJECTS



High Bridge Tower, Manhattan, 1995

Waterworks: The Hidden Water System of New York

by Stanley Greenberg

£40 / $54.00, Kriss Grave Projects, hardback, 128 pages, ISBN: 9781954877191

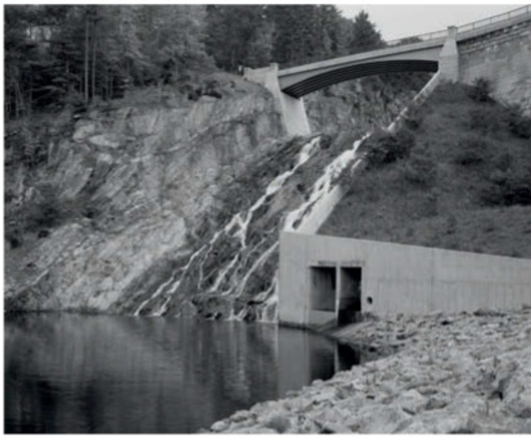
I didn't expect to enjoy *Waterworks*. A photo book dedicated to New York City's hidden water system doesn't exactly scream page-turner. But Stanley Greenberg's black & white images, made in the early 1990s, reveal a subterranean world of beauty, geometry and human ingenuity. This isn't just infrastructure – it's industrial poetry.

Greenberg, armed with access granted by the Department of Environmental Protection, takes us below the surface and behind locked gates, photographing valve chambers, pumping stations, pressure regulators and tunnels that few New Yorkers have ever seen – but all depend on. There's something monumental about the silence and scale he captures. These are cathedrals of utility.

The book itself is beautifully made. Printed by Kris Graves Projects, it has a clean, respectful design that foregrounds the photographs while keeping enough context to understand what you're looking at – even if you're not a hydraulics enthusiast. The introduction by writer Phillip Lopate is thoughtful and concise, and there's even a fold-out map that traces the flow of water from upstate reservoirs down into the city grid. And really, who doesn't love a map?

Greenberg's eye for form and contrast elevates the subject matter. Rivets, staircases, brickwork and shadows all come into play, transforming machinery into minimalist sculpture. There's an almost Becher-like rigour to the way he frames his subjects – but with a distinct New York edge.

Will I hang one of these photos on my wall? Probably not. But I'll return to the book. It's a quietly gripping tribute to the unseen systems that keep a city alive, and a reminder that the functional can be fascinating – even beautiful – when seen with care and clarity.



Dam and Spillway, Cross River Reservoir, Westchester County, 2000

The art of goodbye

Swiss social anthropologist Regula Tschumi spent over two decades photographing Ghana's vibrant funeral culture. Her new book, *Buried in Style*, is a celebration of life, death, and transformation – not just for her subjects, but for the photographer herself. **Peter Dench** finds out more

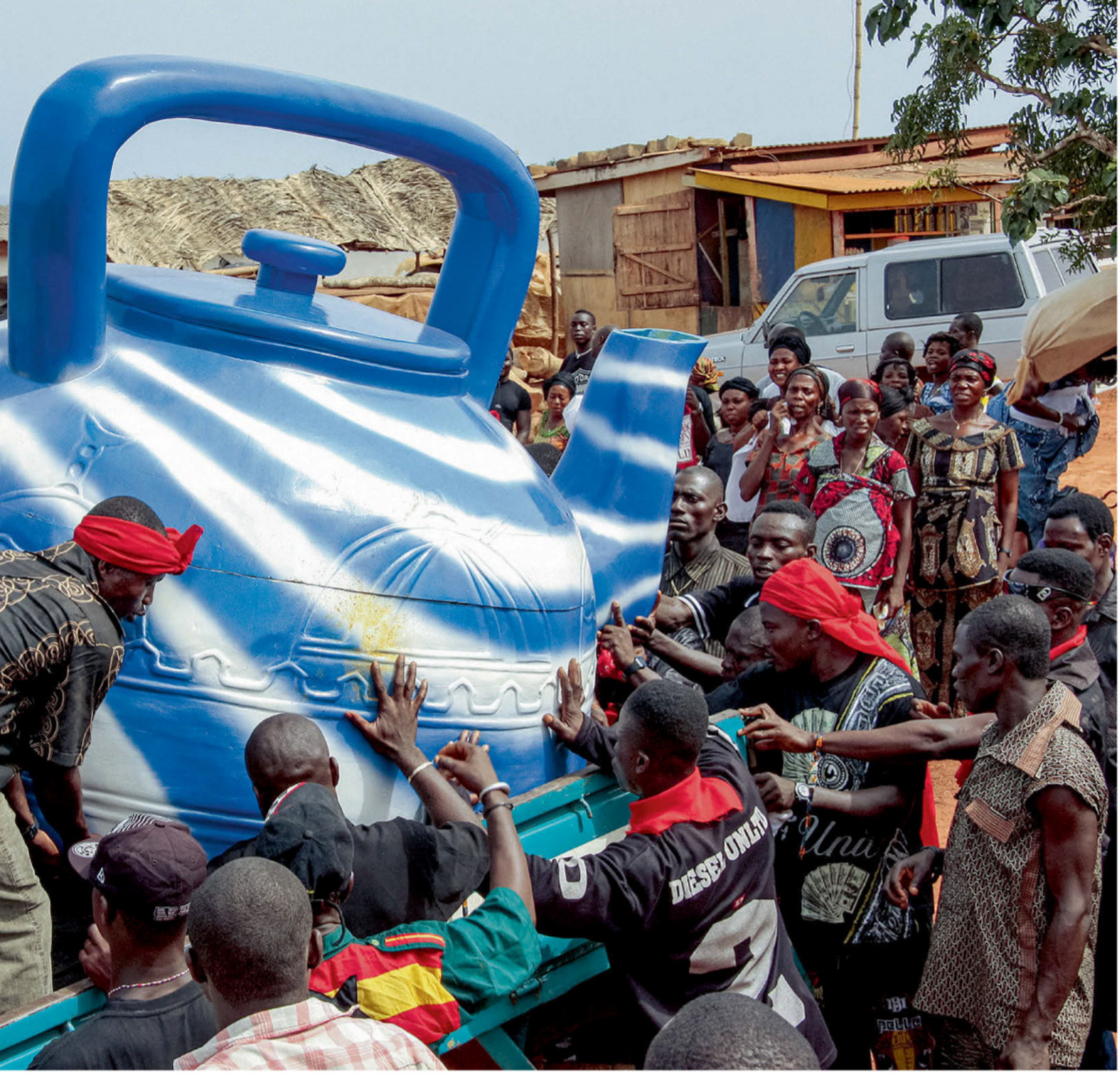
When Regula Tschumi answered the phone, she had just arrived home from Ghana. It wasn't just the jet lag she was contending with – her father had died the day before. 'He was 97. A good death, you know,' she said calmly. 'He did almost everything he wanted to do.' The timing was strange and poignant: her new book *Buried in Style: Artistic Coffins and Funerary Culture in Ghana*, two decades in the making, had just been published (by Kehrer Verlag) – a profound visual study of how Ghanaians honour the dead with style, symbolism, dance and joy.

'I may not even show the book to my family, she added. 'It feels… shy.' Tschumi, a Swiss anthropologist, has spent years immersed in funerals that exploded with colour and choreography – where loved ones might be laid to rest in a fish, a shoe, a teapot or a bulldozer. Back home, in contrast, her father's burial would be sober, bureaucratic. 'In Ghana, there would be a big party – a celebration. Here, it's just running from one office to the next. And when you do the funeral, people come in black and you have to be very serious and you may not even talk of a party.'

Yet *Buried in Style* is about more than cultural comparison. It is a book that fuses anthropology with photography, turning an academic interest into an intensely personal journey – one that saw Tschumi grow from a snapper with no clue to an image-maker of subtlety, structure and deep respect.

Tschumi first travelled to Ghana in 2002 as part of her doctoral research. At the time, photography wasn't her priority. 'I had a small digital camera in my pocket. I didn't know about settings or lenses – it was just faster than taking notes.' Over time, she realised these 'snapshots' were doing more than documenting. They were showing something rarely seen – a funerary culture where grief, art, and pride were bound together in remarkable visual forms.

Coffins shaped like taxis, eagles or loaves of bread are just the



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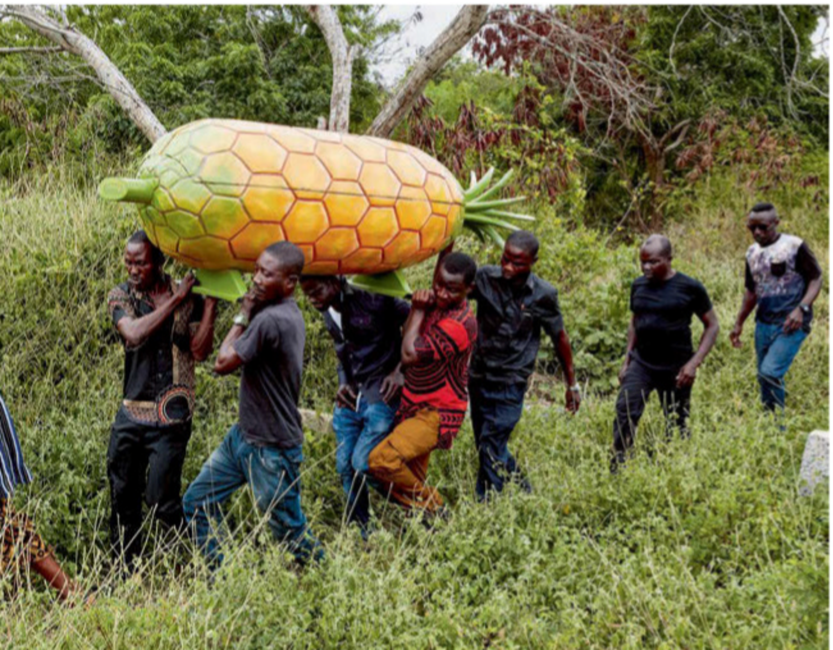


Above: The family presents this fisherman and traditional priest with a coffin that corresponds to the blue teapot he used for his ritual ablutions. Central Region, 2009 (Coffin: Kudjoe Affutu)

Left: Relatives carry the coffin of a pineapple seller to her grave. Greater Accra, 2019 (Coffin: Eric Kpakpo)

beginning. Ghanaians of the Ga-Adangme ethnic group, especially in the southern regions, embrace funerals as public spectacles and spiritual rites of passage. The more impressive the coffin, the decor, or the guest list, the more prestige the family earns – and the more likely the deceased will be remembered fondly as they join the ranks of their ancestors.

Photography gradually shifted from being Tschumi's shorthand to her voice. 'I didn't pay attention at first. Then I reconnected with Peter Turnley.' The American photojournalist – best known for his black & white reportage in *Newsweek* – had met Tschumi in China years earlier, when she was working as a flight attendant. In 2012, she joined one of his photography workshops. 'I didn't know what an aperture was. But he was patient – and he invited me to be his assistant three times.'

Turnley taught her the fundamentals: get close, but not too close. Honour your subject. Let emotion lead. Another mentor, Ernesto Bazan, pushed her in different ways. 'He hated everything I showed him,' she laughs. Bazan challenged her to explore more painterly, composed work – while another influence, Maciej Dakowicz, helped steer her towards Fujifilm cameras and a more compact kit. 'Maciej never pushed me. He'd watch you work and say: this one I like. That one I don't.'

Her early images were shaped as much by instinct as by education. She had studied art history, and grew up painting with her grandfather, a painter himself. 'Composition is natural for me – like sketching. Maybe that's why you see continuity in the book,' she reflects. 'Even the early pictures – they're not technical, but they're composed.'

The book and the body

Buried in Style is not Tschumi's first book on Ghanaian funerals – but it's certainly her most visually ambitious. Earlier titles such as *The Buried Treasures of the Ga: Coffin Art in Ghana* and *Die Bedeutung der figurativen Särge* in Ghana leaned more heavily on academic analysis, tracing the historical and ritual origins of coffin and palanquin art. Her PhD traced the lineage of figurative coffins back to ceremonial palanquins. This latest release is image-led, richly designed and sensitively sequenced. 'The publisher was very hands-on,' she says, 'but the book was almost finished when the graphic designer started. The images, the chapters, the flow – all that came from me.'

The book is structured around five main chapters: Christian funerals, traditional funerals, coffin dancers, laying out, and the coffins themselves. Laying out – the ritual preparation and display of the deceased – is one of the most startling and imaginative aspects of Ghanaian funerals. Undertakers often transform front rooms or tents into fantastical, staged environments: the dead may be arranged sitting upright, reclining on beds with flashing fairy lights, or even, in one unforgettable image from *Buried in Style*, propped up next to a live barbecue, with a bottle of beer in hand. Tschumi explains, 'The aim is to make it feel like they're still here – to keep their presence vivid.'

These theatrical tableaux aren't morbid; they're expressions of love, identity and showmanship.

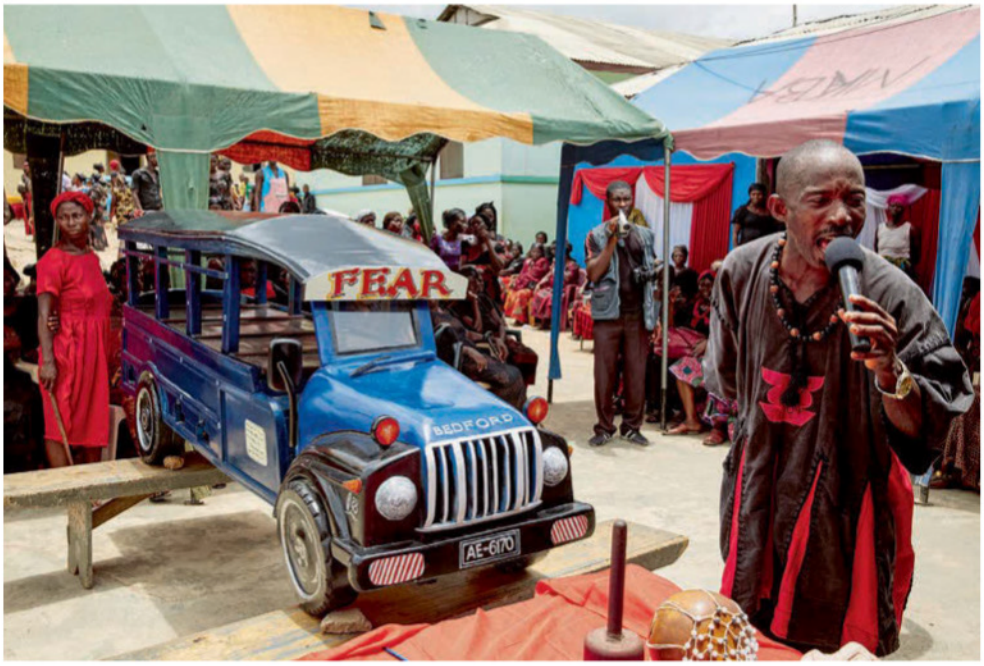
Together, the chapters form a powerful panorama of a country where funerals blur the line between mourning and carnival. Where mobile phone vendors are buried in phone-shaped caskets. Where coffin dancers – in choreographed suits – twirl, glide, and throw the weight of grief skyward.

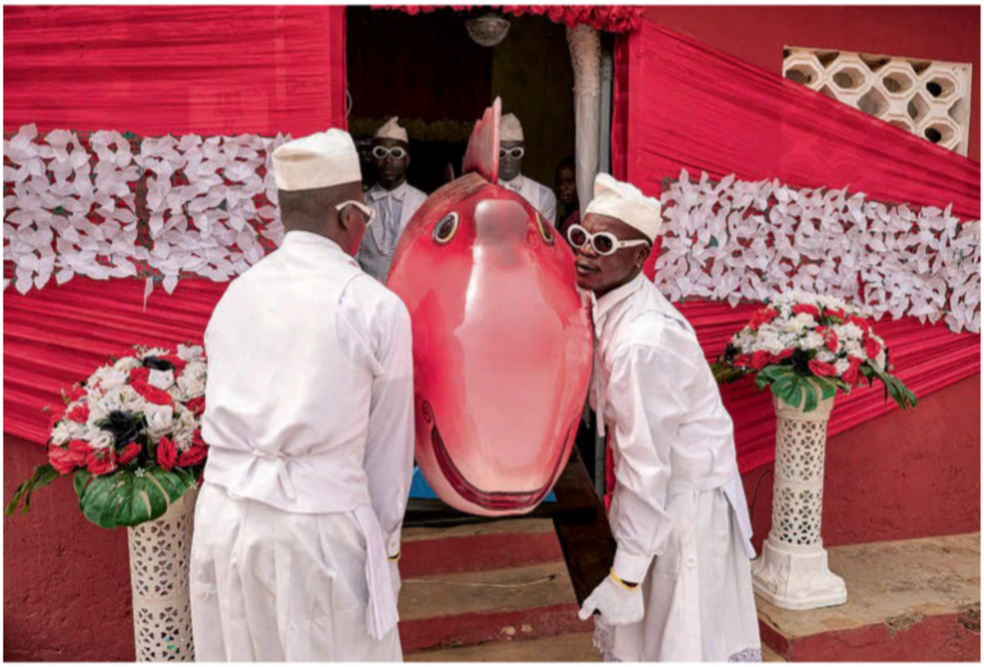
One such dancer, Benjamin Aidoo, features prominently in Tschumi's images. Known worldwide through

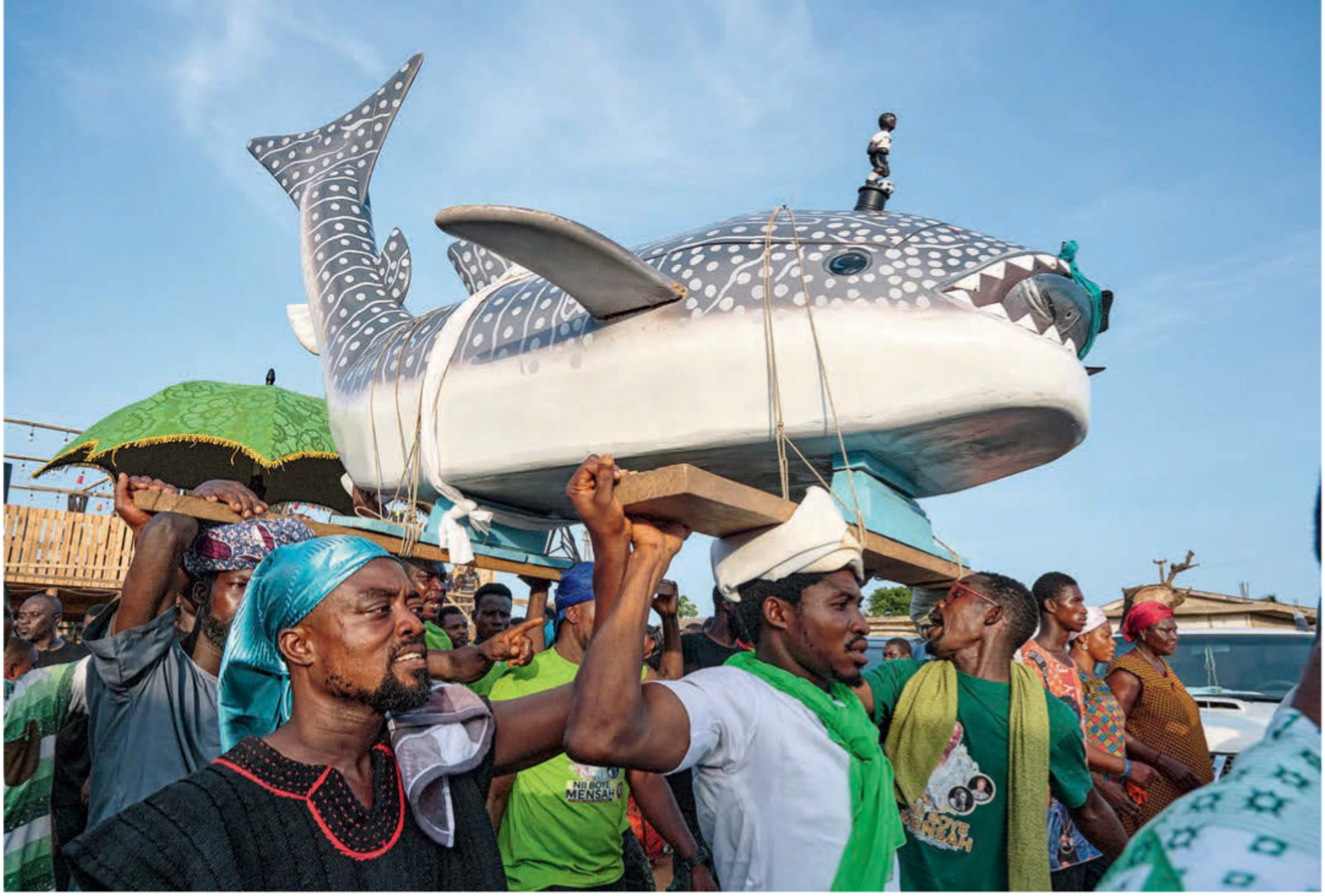
> **'Weddings, birthdays – they can happen again. But each person only has one funeral'**

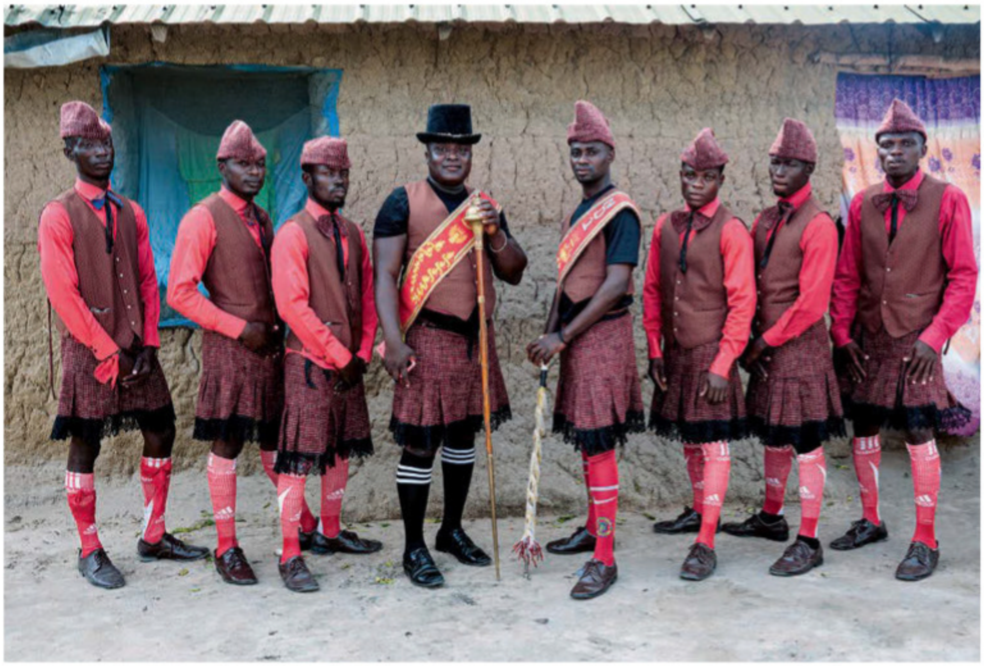
Below: A driver is buried in a coffin in the shape of his Bedford truck. Central Region, 2015 (Coffin: Kudjoe Affutu)

Bottom: The coffin of a fishmonger. The fish is too long for the grave; the tail fin has to be sawn off. Greater Accra, 2024 (Coffin: Eric Kpakpo)









Top: The chief of the fishermen honoured with a whale shark. Greater Accra, 2024 (Coffin: Tawiah)

Above: The Coffin Dancers. Greater Accra, 2022

viral videos, Aidoo has transformed the role of the pallbearer into that of a showman. His team performs in colour-coded uniforms, often to music chosen by the family. 'He wants people to rejoice,' Tschumi says. 'He says: weddings, birthdays – they can happen again. But each person only has one funeral.'

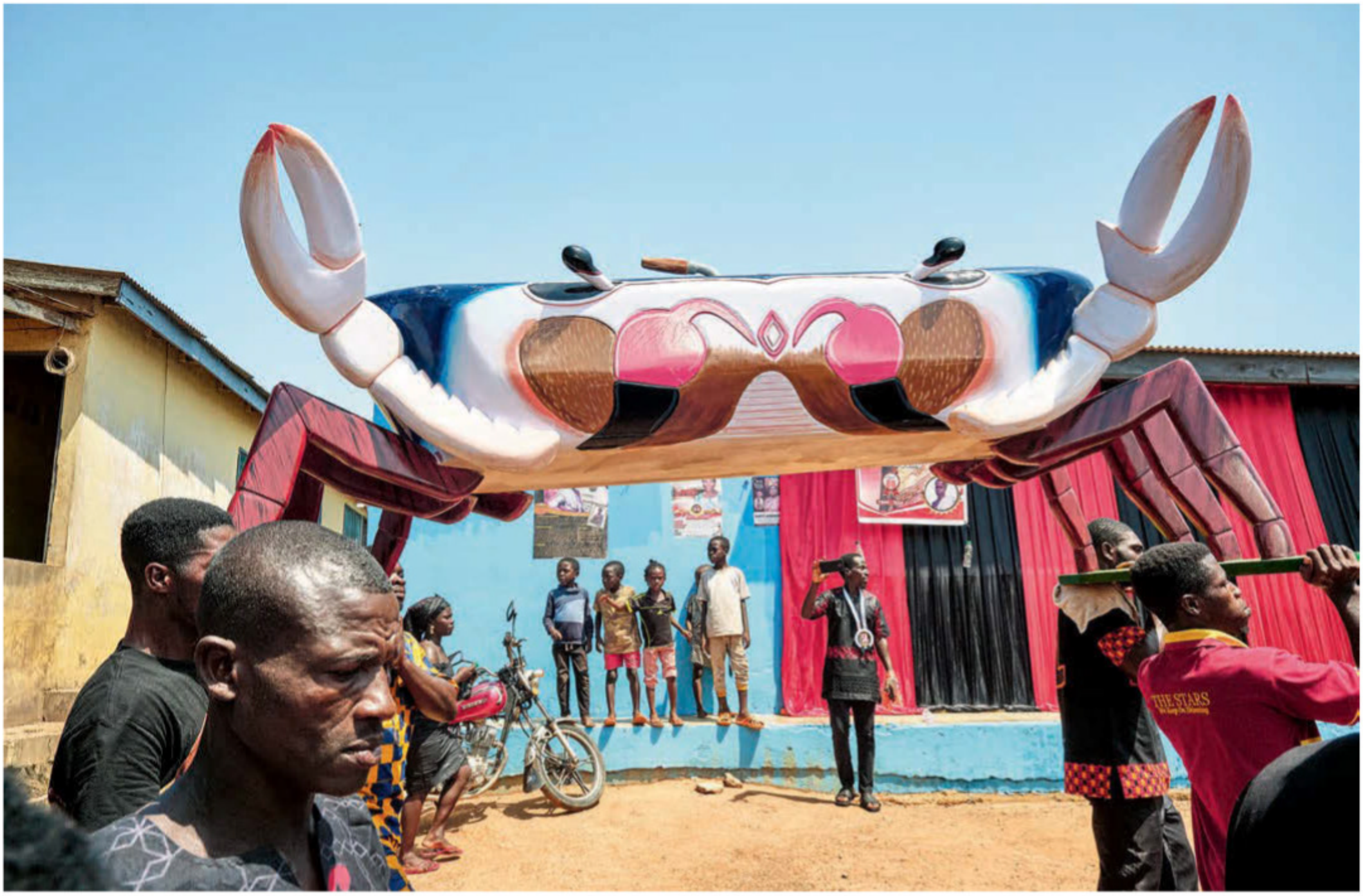
That desire to do things right – once – puts enormous creative and financial pressure on families. Funerals can last days, with multiple ceremonies, intricate laying-out rituals, and performances designed to impress. 'It's partly religious, partly social,' Tschumi explains. 'If you honour someone well, the ancestors will look kindly on you. And guests who enjoy themselves… they give more money.'

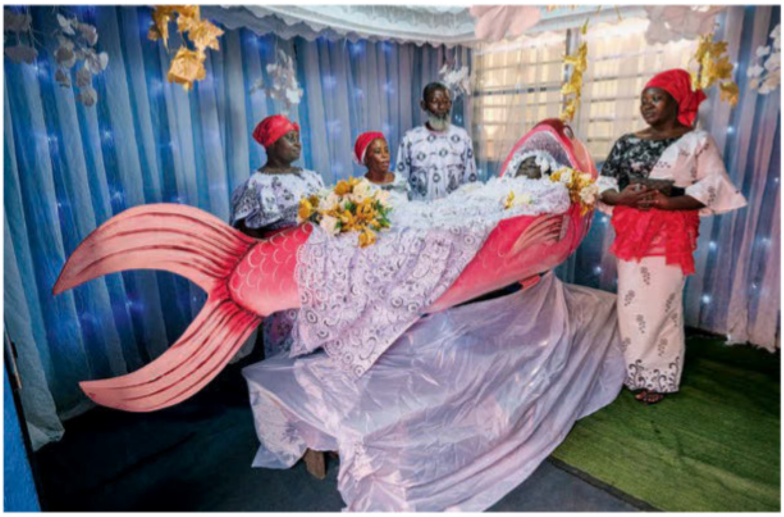
Figurative coffins, meanwhile, a tradition born in Accra region and now replicated throughout Ghana and beyond. The most celebrated names – Kane Kwei, Ataa Oko Addo, Paa Joe – were originally carpenters. Their successors now include Daniel Mensah, Kudjoe Affutu, and Kwaku Hanson, whose work Tschumi captures in dazzling detail. A pineapple seller may be buried in a pineapple; a pig's trotter coffin for a pig's trotter saleswoman; a lorry driver in a blue Bedford truck; a cook in a giant pot of traditional Ghanaian dish kenkey.

Tschumi has seen it all. She's been backstage at coffin workshops, inside laying-out tents, behind the scenes with dancers. She's already written about the coffin makers in other books. *Buried in Style* isn't concerned with how the coffins are built – it's about what they mean. It's about transformation.

Rite of passage

Across the 240 pages of *Buried in Style*, what emerges is not just a record of ritual, but of resilience – both of the people in front of the lens and the one behind it. 'I've changed too,' Tschumi admits. 'My view of death, of what a funeral is – all of that has





Above: Coffin for a builder known as 'Crab'. Central Region, 2024 (Coffin: Kwaku Hanson)

Left: A fisherman in his coffin. Greater Accra, 2024 (Coffin: Eric Kpakpo)

shifted. I now see it as a transition, not an end.'

As her own father died, Tschumi was still navigating the launch of a book about funerals. 'My family probably doesn't see it the same way. It's too close. Too soon.' But the timing, strange as it was, underscores the book's central message: death is not always a tragedy. Sometimes it's a mirror.

The book is also a tribute to her father in more ways than one. During his retirement, he was a prolific art collector and helped found a foundation that now stages exhibitions – one of which Tschumi is helping organise. 'Sadly, he'll never see it. But he would've been proud.'

Buried in Style offers much to admire: not just as ethnography, but as a slow-built, deeply earned photographic practice. Tschumi has moved from not knowing how to set her camera to producing one of the most striking visual records of funerary culture ever published. She brings a painter's sense of framing, a photojournalist's respect, and an anthropologist's curiosity.

What holds it all together is empathy – an unspoken understanding that to photograph death is to honour life. That to document a culture's rituals of goodbye is to open yourself to what you may one day lose.

Regula Tschumi's journey – personal, visual, academic and emotional – is far from over. But *Buried in Style* ensures that the stories she's witnessed, and the people she's honoured, won't be forgotten.

Regula Tschumi
Buried in Style
Artistic Coffins and Funerary Culture in Ghana

Buried in Style: Artistic Coffins and Funerary Culture in Ghana by Regula Tschumi, 240 pages, 283 color illustrations, ISBN 978-3-96900-189-9. To order, visit **www.kehrerverlag.com**

> **'My view of death, of what a funeral is – all of that has shifted. I now see it as a transition'**

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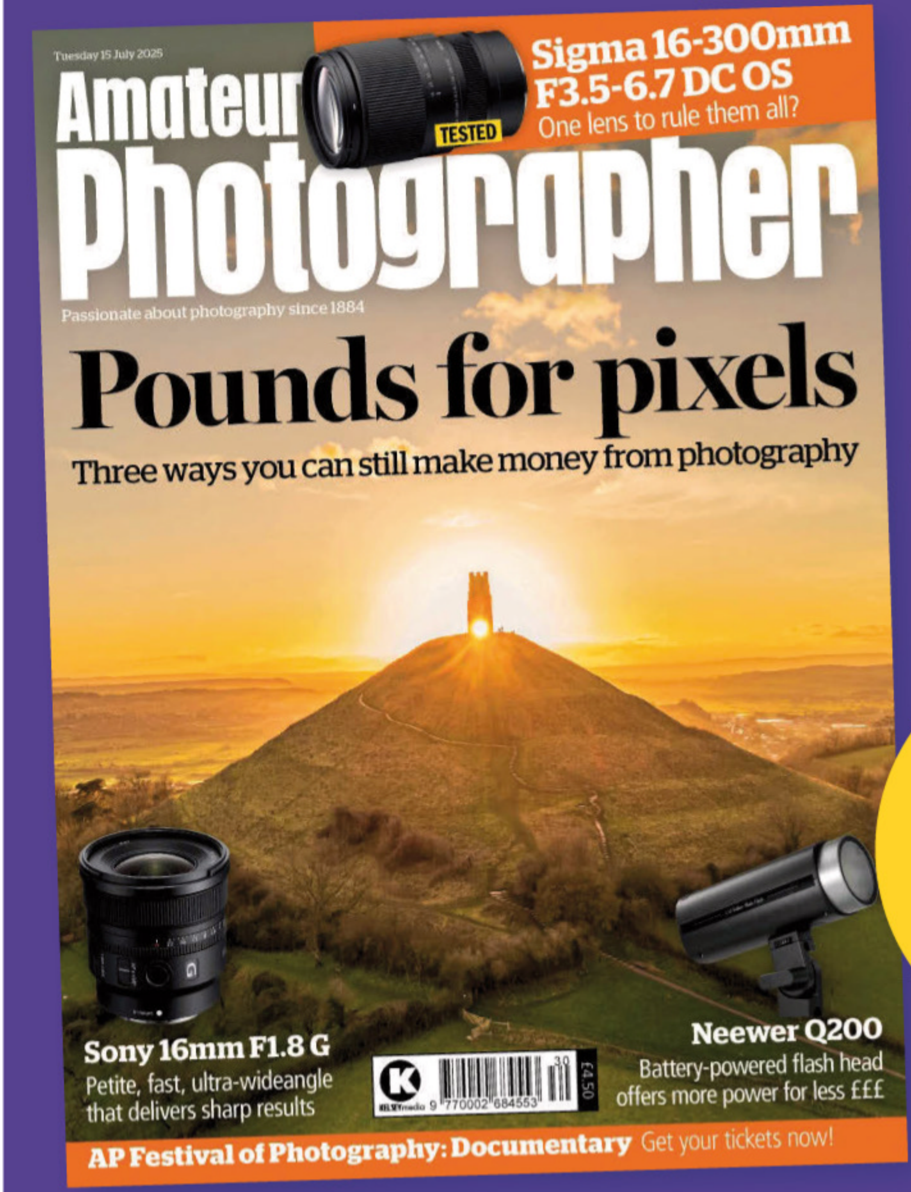

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Round six
Night and Low Light

This round always provides our judges with a wide range of exciting and original entries. Cities are almost the perfect night and low-light subject, especially when they are photographed in the blue hour, when twilight and artificial illumination balance so beautifully. You could also shoot indoors, in an atmospheric café or using the light of a woodburning stove in the home, or at a night-time gig or event. It's a great theme for landscapes, too; when the sun is low in the sky and raking across the scene, it gives compositions an added dimension. This is also the category for those spectacular star trail and astrophotography images, but you might also choose to photograph people at night or in low light, imbuing your shot with a sense of mystery.

Your guest judge

Your guest judge for Round Six is Sarah Lee. Sarah has been photographing for the *Guardian* and *Observer* since 2000, and her images have been featured on the covers of *Time*, *Rolling Stone* and *Vanity Fair*. She's an official BAFTA photographer and a Leica ambassador, and is prolific with her personal work, much of which is shot in the dusky light at the end of the day. See more at sarahmlee.com

Plan your APOY 2025 year

Below is a list of all this year's rounds, including when they open, when they close and the dates the results will be announced in AP

THEME	OPENS PHOTOCROWD & AP	CLOSES	SHORTLIST	RESULTS
Black & White	6 May 2025	26 May 2025	11 June	26 June 2025
People & Portraits	27 May 2025	23 Jun 2025	9 July	24 July 2025
Close-ups & Details	24 June 2025	21 Jul 2025	6 August	21 Aug 2025
Landscapes	22 July 2025	18 Aug 2025	3 September	18 Sep 2025
Celebrating Colour	19 August 2025	15 Sep 2025	1 October	16 Oct 2025
Night & Low Light	16 September 2025	13 Oct 2025	29 October	13 Nov 2025
Animal Kingdom	14 October 2025	10 Nov 2025	26 November	11 Dec 2025
Movement	11 November 2025	8 Dec 2025	23 December	8 Jan 2026
Urban Life	9 December 2025	5 Jan 2026	21 Jan 2026	5 Feb 2026
Open	6 January 2026	2 Feb 2026	18 Feb 2026	5 Mar 2026

YOUR FREE ENTRY CODE

Enter the code below via Photocrowd to get one free entry to Round Six - Night and Low Light

APOY66707056

Matteos came first in last year's Dusk to Dawn round with his spectacular photograph of Rub' al-Khali, a desert on the Arabian Peninsula

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To enter, just

ALL ABOUT APOY 2025

The camera club award

Do you belong to a camera club? You can accumulate precious points for your society when you enter APOY. After all the ten rounds have been completed, the club with the most points will win the ViewSonic X2-4K projector – a 4K HDR High Brightness Smart LED projector boasting a 1440p resolution for crisp visuals. And the club member who contributed the most points to their winning club's overall tally, will take home the VP2786-4K, a superb 27in ViewSonic ColorPro VP86 Series professional monitor, as their prize.

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APOY prizes

The winner of each round of APOY receives a voucher for £500 to spend at Camera Centre UK*, plus free DxO PhotoLab and FilmPack licences worth £340, and a £50 voucher for Bob Books, plus a one-year subscription to The School of Photography, worth £120. The two runners-up in each round will win a free DxO Nik Collection licence worth £146 and a £25 voucher for Bob Books. The overall winner after ten rounds wins a £1,000 voucher to spend at Camera Centre UK* and a £100 voucher for Bob Books.

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The winning club receives a ViewSonic 4K projector, and a first-class monitor for the club's highest-scoring member.

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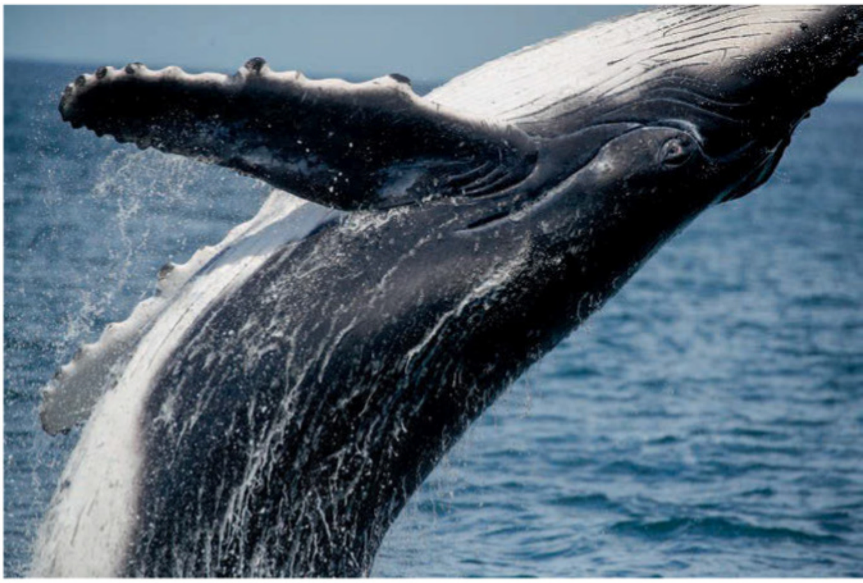
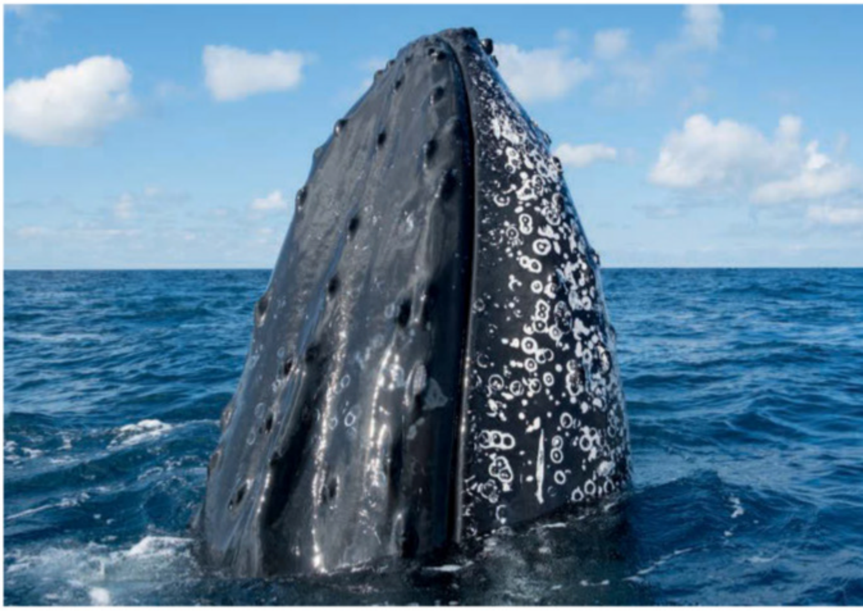
ALL PICTURES © TED LAMB

Humpback highway

Each year, tens of thousands of humpback whales pass the shores of Sydney – but spotting and photographing them is no simple task. **Ted Lamb** shares the thrill of it, the challenges, and the gear you'll need





Above left: Humpback breach. Manly, Sydney, NSW. October, 2024

Top: Breach. October, 2024

Above: Humpback spy hop. Tasman Sea. August, 2024

We'd been searching for almost an hour. My eyes were sore from straining into the distance, and the customers on board were growing complacent. It was mid-afternoon, and I was crouched in my usual position on the back of the boat, four nautical miles from Sydney Harbour, scanning the horizon for one of the ocean's largest animals – the humpback whale. The sun was high in the sky, not a cloud in sight. I was definitely getting sunburnt. The skipper's voice crackled over the PA, offering a few words of encouragement as more than a hundred passengers moved around the boat, eyes peeled for the slightest ripple. Some were glued to their phones, others fighting off seasickness with varying degrees of success.

The back deck, for once, was quiet. I shifted slightly, trying to ease the pressure of my camera gear digging into my shoulders, when something caught my eye – something I won't ever forget. Just below the surface, gliding in absolute silence through the crystal-clear water, was a fully grown humpback whale. Her enormous frame moved with grace, her pectoral fins stretched wide as she passed directly beneath the boat. She was metres from the surface, easily 16m long and weighing upwards of 45 tonnes – two-thirds the length of our vessel. A true leviathan, one of nature's finest submarines.

For a few seconds, I froze. The camera was in my hands, but she was too quick, too close. There was no chance of a shot before she vanished under us. My voice caught for a moment, but I managed to shout to the crew: 'She's here!' I could feel it in my bones – something special was about to happen. Every part of me was alert, and I lowered myself down to the water's edge, scanning the stern, unwilling to miss whatever came next.

Feeling the rush

Then it happened. Maybe 50m from the side of the boat, the glassy surface of the water exploded

upwards. Our gentle giant launched herself into the air, her full body rising from the sea in a breathtaking breach. It's one thing to imagine their size while they swim beneath the surface – but in that moment, suspended in the air, you truly grasp their scale and raw power. Even after hundreds of trips doing this work, I still feel the same rush. Every muscle tensed. Time slowed. I pressed the shutter, and my Canon EOS R1 fired at 40fps, catching every nuance of the breach. I always need the full sequence – those images feed marketing campaigns, social media, and are shared with the passengers on board. I know I'm lucky to have this job, but it still comes with pressure. You have to deliver, and the right tool for the job is critical.

For anyone looking to photograph whales – or any kind of wildlife – there's one piece of advice that stands above all others: know your subject. I came to this as a photographer first, but I've thrown myself into the world of humpback whales with everything I've got. I've read every book I could find, spoken with marine biologists, and reached out on social media to photographers around the world working in this space. That's the beauty of the wildlife photography community: people are generous with their knowledge. There's a shared passion, and most are happy to help others trying to break into the field. Don't be afraid to reach out and ask questions. Learning the behaviour of your subject gives you a massive advantage before you even leave the house. You'll start to predict moments before they happen.

Above: Whale watching, Sydney, NSW. August, 2024

Below: Humpback Breach. Sydney, NSW. June, 2025

Some whale shooters I know practise in the off-season by photographing small, fast birds to keep their reflexes sharp. It's a great way to stay in form.

The biggest challenge in photographing whales isn't technical – it's logistical. These are some of the largest animals on Earth, but it's still a massive ocean. Finding them is no small feat. That's where Sydney offers something quite special. We're spoiled here. Within 15 minutes of leaving the harbour, we're in open ocean and in prime territory on the Humpback

Highway. An estimated 40,000 to 50,000 humpbacks pass along the east coast of Australia each year, with the migration season stretching from May to November. July and September are particularly active months, and when you're doing three trips a day, five days a week, you get well acquainted with both the whales – and the realities of life on a boat.

Keeping well

One of those realities is seasickness. Most people aren't used to offshore conditions, and it can ruin what should be an unforgettable experience. It's especially tough on photographers. I always advise people to take motion sickness tablets an hour before boarding and, if they can, to stay outside and look at the horizon. The passengers who spend their time scrolling through their phones or reviewing shots on the back of the camera usually end up getting far too familiar with a sick bag. I position myself near the rear of the boat – it's the most stable spot – and I'm constantly scanning the horizon for signs of life.

There are three key things I look for, which I refer to as the three B's: Blow, Body Parts, and Breach. The blow is often your first clue – a misty plume of breath as the whale surfaces, not unlike seeing your own breath on a cold morning. In the right light, especially around the golden glow of sunrise or sunset, it can be beautiful. Next comes the movement of body parts. Humpbacks are famous for their surface activity. A tail fluke slapped against the water, a pectoral fin waved in the air, or the sudden appearance of a head in a spy-hop or head-lunge. And finally, there's the breach. It's the crown jewel of whale photography – a moment of pure drama and spectacle. It doesn't happen often, but when it does, it's unforgettable.

To catch that perfect moment, your gear needs to be up to the task, but you don't need the most expensive kit to start. The company I work with is very generous and provides a Canon EOS R1 and the RF100-500mm lens, but I've captured great shots on far more modest setups, including old 35mm film bodies. What matters is reliability and familiarity. Ocean light can shift fast – sun, clouds, reflections and position can change very quickly. I usually shoot in shutter priority at a minimum of 1/2000sec, adjusting ISO as needed. I get my settings dialled in before we even leave the dock, and I don't touch them again unless conditions change dramatically. I shoot JPEG for speed – images are used quickly, so post-processing is minimal: straightening horizons, a boost in colour, a touch of sharpening.

Whale watching and photography are two huge passions of mine and I am incredibly grateful that I get to do this for six months every year. The biggest thing it has taught me though is patience. Not just in the time on a single trip, but the level of patience you need to go out day after day in all conditions to get a split-second opportunity can be very tiring. You're helping with customers, giving commentary and occasionally acting as sea sickness nurse. Nothing compares though, when something special happens and you land the shot – it's one of the best feelings in the world. AP

To see more of Ted's photography, visit **www.tedlamb.com**
To book whale watching in Sydney, visit
www.whalewatchingsydney.com.au

Top: Breach. August, 2024

Above: Double Breach. Manly, June, 2025

Left: Breach. Manly, June, 2025

At a glance

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Fujifilm X-E5

Fujifilm's latest camera aims to be an interchangeable-lens version of the popular X100VI. **Andy Westlake** samples its charms

With its 40MP sensor, the X-E5 can deliver great image quality
Fujifilm X-E5, XF 23mm F2.8 R WR, 1/300sec at f/8, ISO 125

For and against

- ✚ Small body, but with enthusiast-friendly design
- ✚ Engaging analogue controls
- ✚ Peerless out-of-camera colour processing
- ✚ Excellent raw image quality
- ✚ Easy access to three custom film simulation recipes
- ▬ Fairly small viewfinder
- ▬ No weather-sealing
- ▬ Screen only tilts up and down

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Data file

Sensor	40MP X-Trans, 23.5x15.7mm
Output size	7728x5152
Lens mount	Fujifilm X
Shutter speeds	15min-1/4000sec mechanical; 15min-1/180,000sec electronic
Sensitivity	ISO 125-12,800 (standard), ISO 64-51,200 (extended)
Exposure modes	PASM, Auto
Metering	Multi, spot, average, centre weighted
Exposure comp	+/- 5EV in 0.3 EV steps
Continuous shooting	8fps (mechanical shutter); 13fps (electronic); 20fps (1.29x crop)
Screen	3in, 1.04-dot tilting touchscreen
Viewfinder	2.36m-dot, 0.62x OLED EVF
AF points	117 or 425
Video	6K 30p, 4K 60p, Full HD 240p
External mic	3.5mm stereo
Memory card	UHS-II SD
Power	NP-W126S Li-ion
Battery life	400 shots
Dimensions	124.9x72.9x39.1mm
Weight	445g (including battery and card)

Fujifilm's latest camera, the X-E5, is something of a rarity these days. It's a flat-bodied, rangefinder-style mirrorless model with a corner-mounted electronic viewfinder, that's unashamedly designed for enthusiasts. In many respects, it can be seen as an interchangeable-lens version of the hugely popular X100VI – to the extent that it comes with a new, slimline 23mm f/2.8 lens.

The X-E5 follows on from the X-E4, which was launched at the start of 2021. It's fair to say that camera wasn't universally well-liked, due to a somewhat over-simplified design and the lack of any real handgrip. But now Fujifilm has addressed these criticisms and reinstated the controls that went missing from the X-E4, while adding in a few more goodies besides. The result is a very likeable camera indeed.

The X-E5 comes in a choice of silver or black finishes, and costs £1,299 body-only, or £1,549 with the new, matched 23mm F2.8 kit lens. That's pretty close to both the X100VI, and its similarly specified but SLR-shaped sibling, the X-T50. So how does the X-E5 measure up?

Features

Looking first at the key specifications, these are broadly the same as the X-T50 and X100VI. The X-E5 employs the same 40MP APS-C format X-Trans CMOS 5 sensor and X-Processor 5, and notably, it becomes the first model in the X-E series to include in-body image stabilisation.

The sensor provides a sensitivity range of ISO 125-12,800 as standard, which can

be extended to ISO 64-51,200. You can shoot at up to 8 frames per second using the mechanical shutter, 13fps with the electronic shutter, or 20fps with a 1.29x crop, which gives 24MP files.

Subject-detection autofocus is on board, with settings for animals, birds, and various types of vehicles. With the conventional AF system, you can choose between using 117 or 425 focus points, with a wide variety of focus area sizes on offer. New to the X-E5 is the ability to specify three Custom AF zones, which are rectangular groups of AF points of any user-specified size.

Fujifilm has included the same miniaturised in-body image stabilisation unit as in the X-T50. This promises up to 7 stops of shake reduction in the centre of the frame when shooting hand-held, and 6 stops in the corners. Yet it brings only a slight increase in body size, with the X-E5 measuring 125x73x39mm and weighing in at 445g without a lens.

As you'd expect, Fujifilm has included its full suite of Film Simulation modes, which are set using a physical dial. This has positions for the usual favourites: Provia, Velvia, Astia, Classic Chrome, Reala Ace and Acros. There's also space for three custom 'FS' positions, which come set to Classic Neg, Nostalgic Neg, and Pro Neg Std.

However, the big deal on the X-E5 is you can now save your own favourite Film Simulation 'recipes' onto the dial. First you assign the base film simulation you want to use to one of those FS positions, and then customise it via a new, clearly designed menu section which groups together all the relevant settings in one place.

Video recording is available in 6K 30p, 4K 60p, and Full HD 60p, with a Full HD 240p option also available in high-speed mode without audio. You get a standard 3.5mm stereo microphone input and a micro-HDMI output, and it's possible to monitor audio via the USB-C port using an adapter.

Video mode is accessed via the drive button, as the last item on a very long list. That's a pretty strong message from Fujifilm that this really is a camera for shooting stills. It also means photographers can pretty much pretend the video function doesn't exist, if they want. It never gets in the way.

As with most cameras, the X-E5 has built-in Bluetooth and Wi-Fi for connecting to your smartphone. Using Fujifilm's Xapp, you can copy photos to your phone for sharing and use your phone either as a basic shutter release, or a full remote control. However, the X-E5 does introduce some new features.

Firstly, the camera is capable of printing directly to Fujifilm's Instax Link line of Bluetooth instant-film printers (currently the Instax Mini Link 3, Instax Square Link, and Instax Link Wide). This update feels long overdue, with the only disappointment being that it doesn't work with the first-generation Instax Mini Link.

The X-E5 also has a dedicated Bluetooth pairing button recessed into its baseplate. Holding this button down for a second or two initiates the process of connecting to devices for the first time. It's not something you'll use often, but I guess it's nice that it exists.

Fujifilm's JPEGs have great colour rendition – this is Astia, unedited out of camera
Fujifilm X-E5, XF23mm F2.8 R WR, 1/100sec at f/4, ISO 320

Build and handling

My immediate impression on picking up the X-E5 for the first time was that it's a really nice little camera. In-hand, it feels much like the X100VI, which means it's rather nicer than its predecessor. A small finger grip on the front and a thumb ridge on the back provide a surprisingly secure hold, with a clear space on the back for your thumb.

It's a notably good-looking camera, too, with the same kind of sharp, clean lines as the X100VI and GFX100RF. Fujifilm's decision to move the AF illuminator light in front of the viewfinder gives a front-on view that just looks more 'right'. The build quality feels pretty solid, too, thanks to a machined aluminium shell and top-plate dials. It's worth noting, though, that there's no weather-sealing.

An unusually nice rope strap comes in the box, with a sliding suede-backed leather neck/shoulder pad. I really like this strap as it's long enough to use cross-body, as well as over a shoulder or around your neck.

When it comes to the control setup, the X-E5 offers a familiar-looking set of analogue dials. A pair on the top-plate control exposure compensation and shutter speed, but unlike the X100VI, you don't get an ISO dial. Instead, you use the front electronic dial for this setting.

Most of Fujifilm's lenses have an aperture ring, as do many third-party optics. But there are also plenty that don't, including Sigma's excellent f/1.4 DC DN primes and Viltrox's affordable 'Air' series. In this case, you also use the front electronic dial to set the aperture, and click it inwards to toggle between aperture and ISO, which I find works well.

It's also possible to use the front dial to set the film mode, by setting the film dial to its C position. You can even configure it to change the aperture with lenses that have their own rings. Personally, I'm not sure why you'd do either, given that those tactile dials are one of the main attractions of Fujifilm cameras.

As with the X-E4's before it, the shutter speed dial includes a 'P' position for setting the camera to Program auto mode. Presumably the idea is that this provides an easy fall-back option for non-expert users. But oddly, there's no auto subject-detection mode here that can choose between subject types automatically, unlike with the X-T50's equivalent program mode.

A button on top beside the shutter provides a convenient means of toggling face detection on and off. But in Fujifilm's usual way, if you had subject detection engaged previously, the camera won't revert to it when you turn face detection off. I'd like to see Fujifilm fix this behaviour via a firmware update – ideally across its entire lineup.

On the back, there's a small but effective joystick for positioning the focus point, navigating menus and changing settings. A sliding switch on the camera's side selects between focus modes – single, continuous, and manual.

Fujifilm's usual Q button is positioned on the corner within easy reach of your thumb, much like on the X100VI, and gives access to the most important secondary camera settings. Overall it's a highly refined interface that works really well, especially given the camera's small size.

One slight disappointment is that the film-simulation dial is practically impossible to use with the camera up to your eye, due to it being right beside the viewfinder. There's no way your right thumb will stretch across, and it's also impractical to use your left hand. This is unfortunate, as it's really useful to be able to see the effect live in the viewfinder.

One key addition to the X-E5 is a view mode lever on the front, much like those on the X100VI and the medium-format Fujifilm GFX100RF. This lever has four functions, depending on the direction you move it, and whether you just flick it, or hold it in place for a few seconds. Another function is controlled by a button embedded into the lever.

The X-E5 works well with small zooms
Fujifilm X-E5, XF 18-55mm F2.8-4 R OIS at 55mm, 1/900sec at f/4, ISO 400

By default, this control engages digital zoom (1.4x or 2x), along with aspect ratio selection. It also cycles through different 'Surround View Mode' options for visualising how the resultant crops relate to the overall view captured by the sensor. Pressing the centre button cycles through LCD and viewfinder view modes.

This set of options makes sense if you see the X-E5 primarily as a vehicle for prime lenses, with digital zoom and aspect ratio selection adding further compositional flexibility. For example, with the 23mm f/2.8 lens, you get 50mm equivalent at 20MP, and 70mm at 10MP (which is still easily enough for detailed 12x8in/A4 prints). No matter what digital zoom or aspect ratio you set, you always get full-size raw files, but with cropping information embedded into their metadata.

I really like how Fujifilm has managed to put five functions under the control of your forefinger with this control. And if you don't want to use the assigned functions, you can customise them from a wide range of options. The only caveat is that the pull-and-hold actions take far too long to register, so I relegated them to options I'd only change infrequently.

Overall, I've found the X-E5 to be a very pleasant and engaging camera to use – which is just as you'd expect from an 'interchangeable lens X100'. All those dials encourage you to immerse yourself in the shooting process, rather than just letting the camera do its thing on Auto. Simply by its presence, the film dial encourages you to experiment with the various colour looks more than you otherwise would.

It's not necessarily perfect, though, and in particular, I found the controls on the front can be a bit too easy to hit inadvertently. More than once, I've nudged the ISO dial by accident, or switched between viewfinder and LCD viewing modes by pressing the front button. This is especially disconcerting if you manage to select the 'EVF only + Eye sensor' mode, because then the camera doesn't appear to turn on when you flick the power switch.

I spent much of my time shooting with the matched Fujinon XF 23mm F2.8 R WR pancake lens, which fits the camera's aesthetic perfectly and adds very little to the bulk. I also found the X-E5 to be a really nice match to small zooms such as the classic XF 18-55mm F2.8-4 R LM OIS. But I also used it with both the Sigma 16-300mm F3.5-6.7 DC OS all-in-one superzoom and the XF 70-300mm F4-5.6 R LM OIS WR, which are considerably larger but still worked absolutely fine. You just hold the combination by the lens.

Focal points

The X-E5 packs a lot of features into its small, photographer-friendly body

Slim kit lens

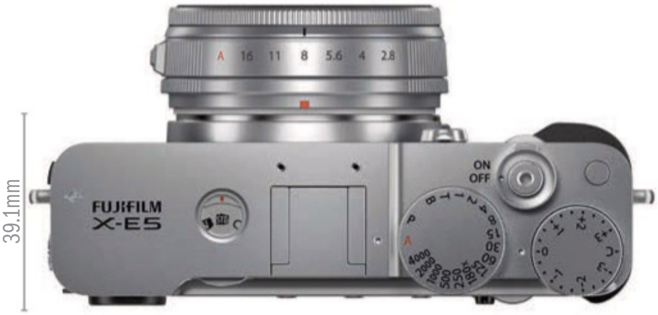
The matched XF 23mm F2.8 R WR lens is slim and lightweight, yet retains an aperture ring and weather-resistant construction.

Film dial

The film-simulation dial is recessed behind a top-plate window. You can now save your own custom recipes to its three FS positions.

Connectors

Behind a hinged door on the side, there's a 3.5mm microphone/remote port; micro-HDMI for video out; and USB-C for battery charging, data transfer to a computer, and monitoring audio via a headphone adapter.



Hot shoe

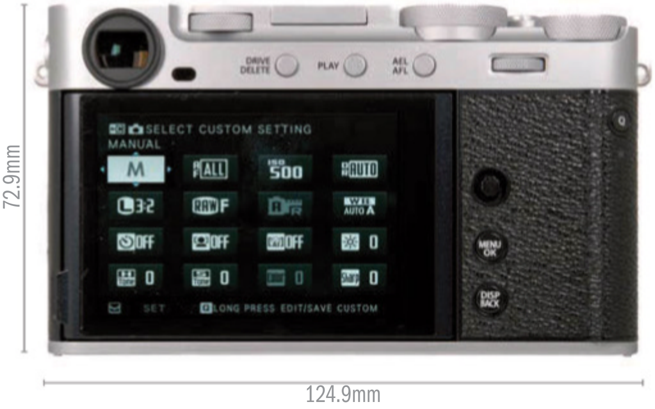
There's no built-in flash, but a shoe on top will accept dedicated flash units, including the super-small EF-X8 that draws its power from the camera's battery.

Storage

Files are recorded to a single SD card slot which, as on the X-T50, accepts the faster UHS-II type cards.

Power

The camera is powered by the long-running NP-W126S battery. It charges via the USB-C port and is rated for 400 shots per charge.



Viewfinder and screen

On paper, Fujifilm has used the same spec electronic viewfinder as all its previous X-E models, with a 2.36m-dot OLED panel and 0.62x magnification. That means that it's one of the smaller viewfinders you'll find, but even so, it works perfectly well for composing your images. It's bright enough to be usable on a sunny day and it gives a good impression of how your shots will turn out.

Exposure and colour processing are previewed by default, and when you half-press the shutter button, the lens stops down to the taking aperture, to give depth-of-field preview. You can overlay a live histogram, gridlines, and electronic levels to aid composition.

Fujifilm has also added a new viewfinder display mode that aims to mimic old film SLRs. This shows the main exposure settings below the preview image in the fashion of a red multi-segment LED display, with a 'meter needle' on the right indicating over or underexposure. Personally I found it gimmicky, but I imagine others will like it.

Below the viewfinder is a 3in, 1.02m-dot LCD, which is surprisingly low in resolution compared to the X-T50 and X100VI's 1.82m-dot screens. However, not only does it tilt up and down, but it can also face forwards over the top of the camera for photographing or videoing yourself, which neither of those cameras can match. However, it's worth bearing in mind that you can't really put anything on the hot shoe without blocking most of the screen.

Autofocus

When it comes to autofocus, the X-E5 works the same way as Fujifilm's other current cameras. With the conventional AF system, you have a choice between 117 or 425 points arranged across the entire frame, depending on whether you value speed or precision when setting the focus point. There are six different focus-area sizes, plus six zone options for use with moving subjects, three of which are user-customisable. You also get a tracking mode where you select the subject and the camera will follow it around the frame.

Pressing a button on the top plate enables or disables face detection, while subject detection is enabled from the Q menu. Here you can select between animal, bird, automobile, motorcycle & bike, airplane and train options. However as there's no auto option, you always have to tell the camera in advance what you want to focus on. Face detection and subject detection are mutually exclusive – enabling one disables the other.

Personally – and presumably because I'm used to it, and have figured out how it works – I find Fujifilm's AF system works pretty well. With static subjects, it's every bit as fast and accurate as you'd expect from a modern camera. I also got a respectable hit rate with moving subjects such as wildlife and trains. However, it's not as straightforward to use as some other brands, and it's clear that a lot of users struggle with it.

To get face or subject detection to work sensibly, you'll need to make sure the AF mode switch is set to its C position. You also need to pay attention to your focus area size and position, as these define where the camera will start looking for subjects. I generally find it best to use the largest focus zone, which gives the camera the best chance of acquiring a subject. However if there are multiple options, and you want to be able to select between them, that may require using a smaller focus zone and moving it with the joystick.

Performance

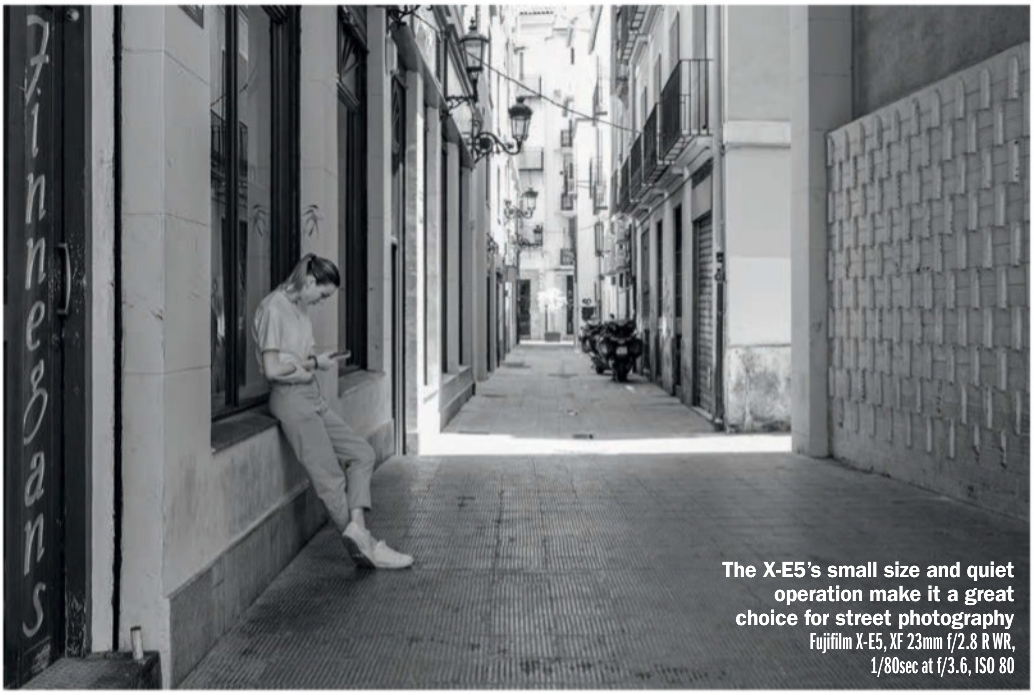
The X-E5 is now the fifth model in Fujifilm's fifth-generation lineup with a 40MP sensor and X-Processor 5. As a result, it doesn't bring any surprises in terms of either operational performance or image quality. Which is to say, it's a very fine camera indeed.

Flick the power switch to the on position, and the X-E5 is ready to shoot in a fraction of a second. It's pretty discreet too, with a shutter that fires with just a quiet clack. That said, it can't match the X100VI's lens shutter, which is essentially silent.

Fujifilm's stated battery life of 400 shots per charge seems realistic enough, especially if you're the kind of person who religiously turns the power off in between shots. At any rate, I never really felt that I was in need of more than one spare, which I'd always recommend getting anyway. Fujifilm has been using this NP-W126 battery for over a decade now, so cheaper but reliable third-party clones are very easy to find if you don't want to pay full price for an original.

Continuous shooting performance is very respectable,

The 40MP sensor gives huge scope for cropping. This 4MP crop equates to 1400mm equivalent
Fujifilm X-E5, XF 70-300mm F4-5.6 at 300mm, 1/2000sec at f/8, ISO 2000



The X-E5's small size and quiet operation make it a great choice for street photography
Fujifilm X-E5, XF 23mm f/2.8 R WR, 1/80sec at f/3.6, ISO 80

with the camera matching its specified shooting speeds in my tests. It'll keep going for at least 20 frames, when shooting in uncompressed or lossless-compressed raw, and many more than that if you're happy to switch to compressed raw. Given that this really isn't the first form-factor you'd choose for sports and action photography, that feels more than adequate.

Fujifilm's in-body stabilisation works very well, too. I found that it's possible to get entirely usable shots at shutter speeds as slow as a second hand-held, especially if you're prepared to tolerate a little pixel-level blur (which on a 40MP sensor is entirely reasonable). This can help you keep ISOs down when shooting in low light with subjects where motion blur won't be a problem.

Overall, image quality is essentially indistinguishable from the likes of the X-T5 and X100VI. This means it's better than any other APS-C camera out there, and in certain respects, it surpasses many full-frame cameras. That 40MP sensor is capable of resolving lots of detail, giving you plenty of scope for printing large or cropping. Plus of course, you get Fujifilm's famously attractive out-of-camera colour rendition, which gives JPEG files so attractive that you may not feel any need to shoot and process raw files.

As usual, Fujifilm's metering is extremely reliable, and the viewfinder gives you a good impression of what you're going to get. So there's rarely any need to apply exposure compensation, aside from for creative effect. Auto white balance is consistently well judged, too. This is really important as not only does this make those camera files look right, it also means that you have the perfect start-point for processing your raw files.

Then, of course, there's those signature Film Simulations. Fujifilm is unique in giving such a wide choice of attractive colour modes, and I'd defy anyone not to find several that they really like. I tend to gravitate to Astia by default, switching to Velvia for extra punch, or Acros for black & white shots. But honestly, there are so many great options here that you're spoiled for choice – especially as you can now apply Recipes, too. And remember, Film Simulations are not just for JPEGs; if you use Adobe software, you get most of them in raw, as well.

In fact raw image quality is extremely impressive, too. At low ISOs, you can expect to be able to pull up three or four extra stops of shadow detail without being troubled by noise, and it's rare that you'll need more than that. I'm also perfectly happy using this sensor at sensitivities up to ISO 12,800, particularly with the noise-reduction tools now available. Ultimately, this is a camera that punches well above its weight in terms of image quality.

Verdict

Amateur Photographer
Testbench
GOLD
★★★★★

THE FUJIFILM X-E5 is a fabulous little camera that goes a long way to meeting Fujifilm's promise of an 'interchangeable-lens X100VI'. Like its fixed-lens sibling it looks great, is a joy to shoot with, and is capable of producing fantastic results. But now, you can use lots of different lenses. What's not to like about that?

You get all of Fujifilm's usual attractions, including those lovely tactile dials for changing exposure settings. It's not often that we see small cameras that are so unashamedly – and successfully – designed for serious photographers. It's great to see the firm embracing the idea of user-generated film-simulation recipes, too.

While some cameras might only appeal to a niche audience, with the X-E5 I'm left wondering who wouldn't fall for its charms. It's perhaps not the best choice for novices looking for a point-and-shoot. But for anyone looking to buy a 'proper' camera that's portable yet fully featured, it's an easy recommendation.

If you're an existing Fujifilm user who'd like a smaller camera to complement an X-T or X-H, it would be the perfect choice. Likewise it's a massive update from older X-E models. It could also be an ideal second camera for enthusiasts who'd like something smaller than their main kit for family or social events. It would be a fine choice for travel or street photography, too.

In a market dominated by full-frame mirrorless cameras that all look much the same, the X-E5 really is a breath of fresh air. It proves that cameras don't need to look like an SLR to work really nicely, and don't need a full-frame sensor to deliver fantastic photos. It's yet another home run for Fujifilm.

FEATURES	8/10
BUILD & HANDLING	9/10
METERING	9/10
AUTOFOCUS	8/10
AWB & COLOUR	10/10
DYNAMIC RANGE	8/10
IMAGE QUALITY	9/10
VIEWFINDER/LCD	8/10

Veeniix

V11MINI 4K Drone

Fun in Flight, Life in Sight

8K Photo

4K/30fps Video

3-Axis Brushless Gimbal+EIS

96 Mins Flight Time

amazon Veeniix V11MINI 4K

This first 'Pro' line offering from Viltrox is a fine portrait lens at a remarkably affordable price
Sony A1 II, 1/2500sec at f/1.4, ISO 100

Viltrox AF 85mm F1.4 Pro FE

Angela Nicholson tries out Viltrox's first Pro-series full-frame lens, designed with portrait photographers in mind

Founded in 2009, Viltrox is a relative newcomer to the photo industry. But recently, its lenses have garnered attention thanks to their attractive prices and impressive image quality. This bodes well for the AF 85mm F1.4 Pro FE, which is the first full-frame optic in the company's Pro lens range. It's available in the Sony FE mount.

Because of its flattering perspective and comfortable working distance, the 85mm focal length is a favourite with portrait photographers. Naturally, large apertures are also favoured for blurring backgrounds and giving subject separation, so this lens's maximum aperture of f/1.4 ticks an important box, promising creative depth-of-field control and useful low-light capability. For context, an 85mm lens gives just 4cm depth of field at f/1.4 with a subject distance of 2m, while an f/1.8 lens gives 6cm. That might not sound like much difference, but the fall-off in sharpness is rapid.

Crucially, at £569, the Viltrox AF 85mm F1.4 Pro FE sits in much the same price bracket as Sony's FE 85mm F1.8. It's also less than a third of the cost of the Sony FE 85mm F1.4 G Master II, and considerably cheaper than the Sigma 85mm F1.4 DG DN Art.

Features

Optically, the AF 85mm F1.4 Pro is constructed from 15 elements arranged in 11 groups and includes 3 ED (Extra-low

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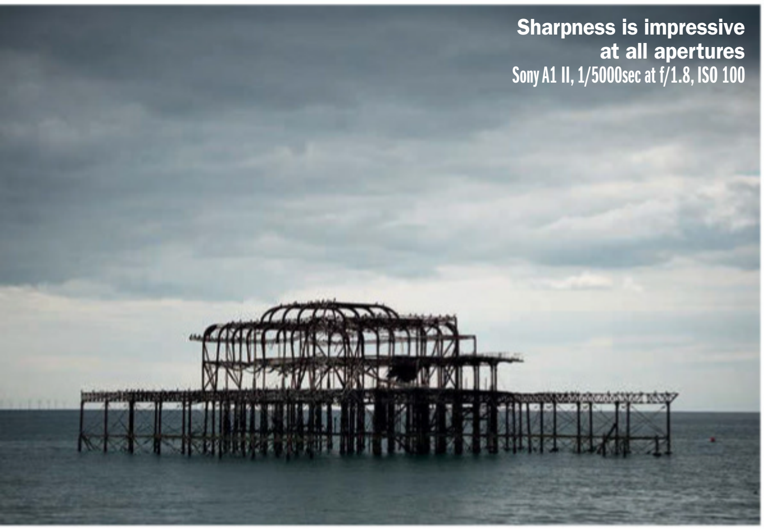
Here, some lovely soft bokeh complements the subject
Sony A7R IV, 1/200sec at f/1.4, ISO 100

Dispersion) elements, 9 high-refractive index elements and 1 aspherical element. These help to maintain sharpness and minimise aberrations and fringing. Viltrox's advanced nano-coating is applied to reduce flare and ghosting, and the front element has a water-repellent coating. There's no stabilisation.

The autofocus system uses Viltrox's patented HyperVCM (Voice Coil Motor) drive. It's designed to be fast, quiet and smooth for both stills and video. The dual-motor system is said to enable micrometre-level accuracy, and Viltrox claims it's 150% faster than its STM motors. The focusing system also works internally, so the lens doesn't change length during focusing.

Additional features include an aperture ring with settings running in 1/3-stop steps from f/1.4 to f/16 and a click/de-click switch, an AF/MF switch, a focus hold button and USB-C port in the mount for firmware updates. The lens also supports Sony's Eye and Face Detection.

Viltrox supplies the lens with a deep, circular hood to help with flare control and add some protection from knocks and raindrops. There's a thread for 77mm filters.



Sharpness is impressive at all apertures
Sony A1 II, 1/5000sec at f/1.8, ISO 100

Build and handling

Weighing around 800g, the Viltrox AF 85mm F1.4 Pro FE is no featherweight (for comparison, the Sony FE 85mm F1.4 GM II weighs 642g). But its full-metal construction gives it a solid, reassuring feel. It also has weather-resistant sealing, including a gasket around the metal lens mount, making it suitable for outdoor use in poor weather. In addition, the lens balances well on full-frame Sony cameras such as the Sony Alpha A1 II and A7R IV I used during my testing. It doesn't feel especially front-heavy and it's comfortable to use hand-held for long periods.

Physically, the lens has a smart, streamlined design. The aperture ring is closest to the mount and the switch to toggle between clicked and smooth adjustment is conveniently placed for operation by your left thumb. The broad manual-focus ring turns smoothly and with a suitable level of resistance for precise adjustments. The AF/MF switch is easy to locate on the left side of the barrel, just forward of the aperture ring.

One disappointment is that there's only one focus-hold button. This means that the control is only within easy reach of your left thumb when the camera is in landscape orientation. It would be nice to have a second button that's located for use in portrait orientation, especially given the likely use of the lens. There's also no lock to prevent the aperture ring from rotating accidentally between the aperture values and its 'A' setting for camera control.

The USB-C port, located within the outer weather-resistant seal on the mount, allows firmware updates via the Viltrox app. While it's unlikely to be used regularly, it's a handy feature for future-proofing the lens.

Rather unnervingly, the focus

Autofocus works well with Sony's face detection
Sony A1 II, 1/640sec at f/6.3, ISO 100

group inside the lens isn't locked in place unless the lens is on a camera that's powered up. Consequently, you can feel some movement inside when you move the lens, when the camera is turned off or it's unattached.

Autofocus

On the Sony A7R IV and A1 II, the AF 85mm F1.4 Pro FE's focusing proved quick and quiet. It locked onto subjects decisively, and the eye detection worked well when I tested the lens at the Brighton Pride parade. The focus motor responds quickly and accurately to get the subject sharp.

Viltrox's HyperVCM motor seems to deliver on its promise. The lens shifts focus smoothly and almost silently; I can feel the elements moving rather than hear them. I found the lens also tracks moving subjects reliably. There's a touch of focus breathing, which means that the lens appears to zoom out a little as the focus distance is increased. It's unlikely to be an issue for most portrait work.

Thanks to the Sony cameras' autofocus system, I didn't really need to use the manual-focusing system for anything other than for testing and the occasional blip with a subject very close to the nearest focusing point. Again, the lens responds quickly and precisely to movements of the focusing ring. Conveniently, when Full-Time DMF is activated on the camera, you can adjust the focus manually using the lens ring in autofocus mode.

Image quality

Even at f/1.4, the Viltrox AF 85mm F1.4 Pro FE is impressively sharp at the centre of the frame. Examining files at 100% reveals a fall-off towards the far corners, but it's well-controlled and unlikely to trouble most users. At f/2, the corners begin to sharpen up, and by f/2.8, the image is almost uniformly sharp across the frame. Diffraction slightly softens the results at f/16, but overall, sharpness is impressive, and I'd be happy to use the full aperture range.

At f/1.4, there's a clear tonal gradation from the centre to the corners, with some noticeable vignetting. It begins to fade by f/2 and becomes minimal by f/2.8. At f/4 and beyond, the corner brightness is much improved so images are evenly illuminated. As someone who often adds a little corner-shading, the vignetting could even be a benefit in portraits, subtly drawing attention towards the subject.

Those ED elements appear to do their job very well, as chromatic aberration is well-managed. I didn't notice any significant colour fringing, even in high-contrast backlit scenes. This makes the lens a reliable choice for outdoor portraits and event photography.

There is a very mild suggestion of pincushion distortion when scrutinising some architectural elements or images with lots of straight lines. But in general shooting, it's barely noticeable. I certainly wouldn't worry about it, especially for portraiture and general photography.

Further good news is that the lens produces attractive bokeh. Backgrounds are rendered softly, while specular highlights remain round and clean across most of the frame. In the extreme corners, some cat's-eye effect appears, but its not objectionable. When the highlights are nearer the point of focus, they can show a hint of the 11-blade aperture shape, but it's not too distracting. Overall, the bokeh is well-suited to portrait work. I also enjoyed using the lens for environmental product photography, because the widest aperture helps the product to stand out from its surroundings. AP

Verdict

THE AF 85mm F1.4 Pro FE marks an impressive debut for Viltrox's Pro lens line. Its combination of sharp optics, wide aperture and dependable autofocusing makes it a highly capable tool for portrait photographers.

Despite its size and weight, the lens handles well and feels robust. With the exception of the single focus-hold button and no lock for the aperture ring, the controls are well thought out. There are some nice practical features like the aperture ring click switch and USB-C port that enables firmware updates. Autofocus is quick, quiet and reliable, aided by excellent compatibility with Sony's advanced focus tracking systems.

Most importantly, the image quality is very good, with crisp central sharpness even at f/1.4, minimal chromatic aberration and pleasing background blur. As with most lenses, there is some corner softness and vignetting wide open, but both are within acceptable limits, and while technically flaws, they can add to the appeal of the image.

Considering its price point of £569, this lens offers remarkable value. It doesn't quite match the perfection of more-expensive rivals, but it comes surprisingly close. For photographers wanting a fast, reliable 85mm portrait lens without breaking the bank, it's a very compelling option.

Data file

Price £569
Filter diameter 77mm
Lens elements 15
Groups 11
Diaphragm blades 11
Aperture f/1.4-f/16
Min focus 0.79m
Length 108.5mm
Diameter 84.5mm
Weight 800g
Lens mount Sony FE
Included accessories Lens caps, lens hood, soft case

Amateur Photographer Testbench GOLD ★★★★★

Benro GD36PT 3-way geared head

Andy Westlake tests an unusual hybrid geared/ball tripod head

● £330 ● uk.benroeu.com

This unusual tripod head places a 2-axis geared mechanism on top of a ball-and-socket joint. It aims to deliver the precise compositional adjustment provided by geared heads, but in a less bulky package compared to conventional designs. That could be useful both for landscape photographers who need their horizons to be level, and for those shooting architecture who require their verticals to be perfectly aligned.

Design-wise, the GD36PT fits a lot into an impressively compact package. It has an inverted ball head at its base, with the locking lever placed off to one side, and a single notch that allows the camera to be rotated through 90° for vertical shooting. The tilting mechanism sits out the front, offering +/-15° of adjustment via knobs on either side. Above this, the pitch control offers +/-8° of movement via a single large knob. On top, the camera clamp pans smoothly through 360°.

The head comes with a removable bottom plate, which Benro says should 'eliminate any interference with the operation on tripods with larger platforms'. Unfortunately, though, the spacer itself interferes with the movements when the camera is set for vertical shooting. I'd get around this by using an L-bracket on the camera.

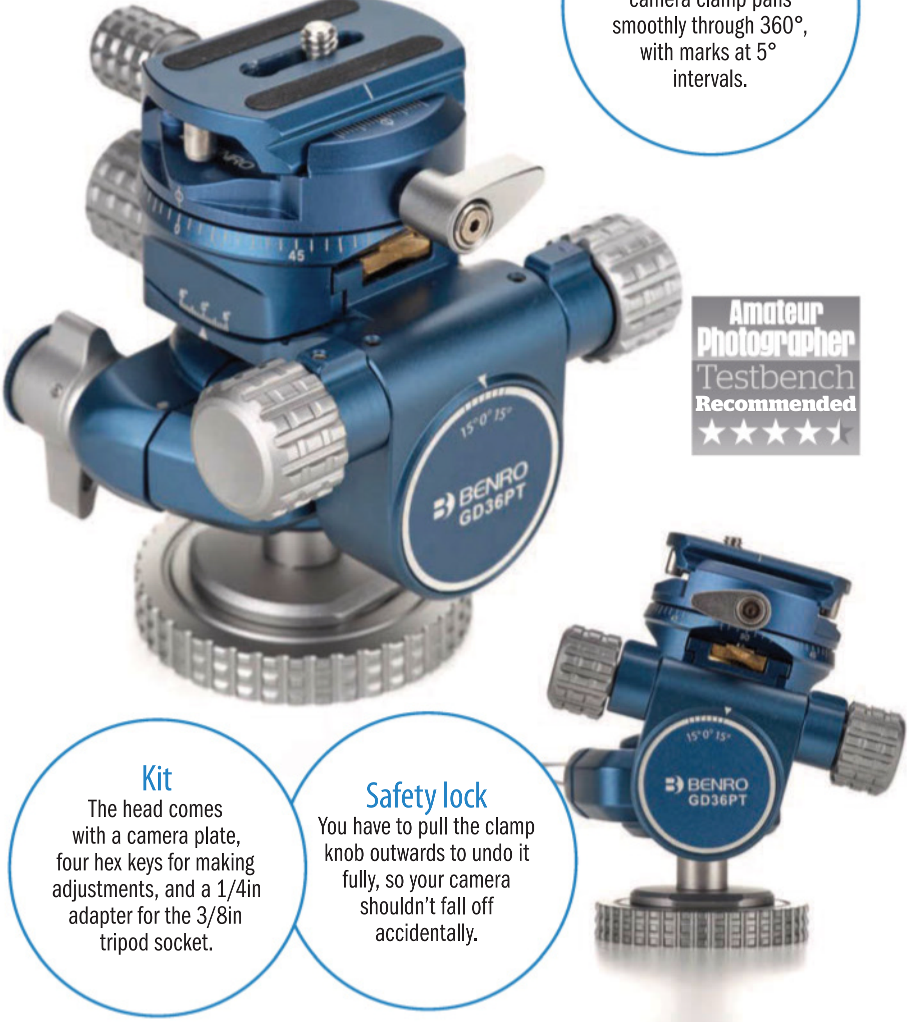
I've established that the best approach for using this head is to adjust the ball first to get the camera close to how you want it, while ensuring the pitch and tilt axes are lined up correctly. Then you can easily fine-tune your composition with the geared controls. Used like this, it comes very close to combining the speed and convenience of a ball head with the accuracy of a geared one. Load capacity is impressive too; I had no problem adjusting a full-frame camera with a long telephoto lens with absolute precision.

Verdict

In use, I've found that the Benro GD36PT works very well. It's nicely made, and the metallic blue finish looks smart. It's easier to carry around than conventional geared heads, too, thanks to its relatively compact size.

What's likely to give pause for thought, though, is the price. It's considerably more expensive than either the firm's stalwart GD3WH geared head, or any of its ball heads. But for serious landscape photographers, it could still be worth the money.

ALL PRICES ARE APPROXIMATE STREET PRICES



Bubble level
A small circular level assists with getting horizons straight, but it gets hidden beneath the camera.

Panning
The Arca-Swiss type camera clamp pans smoothly through 360°, with marks at 5° intervals.

Amateur Photographer Testbench Recommended ★★★★½

Kit
The head comes with a camera plate, four hex keys for making adjustments, and a 1/4in adapter for the 3/8in tripod socket.

Safety lock
You have to pull the clamp knob outwards to undo it fully, so your camera shouldn't fall off accidentally.

At a glance

- Hybrid geared/ball head
- +/- 8° pitch, +/-15° tilt
- Weight 660g (740g with spacer)
- Height 9.5cm (10.5cm with spacer)
- Rated load 6kg

ALSO CONSIDER

If you'd prefer a more conventional geared head, Benro's GD3WH (right) comes highly recommended. It costs £220 and provides precise geared control in three directions. Its main drawback in comparison to the GD36PT is significantly greater bulk, although it weighs about the same, at 740g.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

Bell & Howell Electric Eye 127

John Wade discovers an unusually automated snapshot camera

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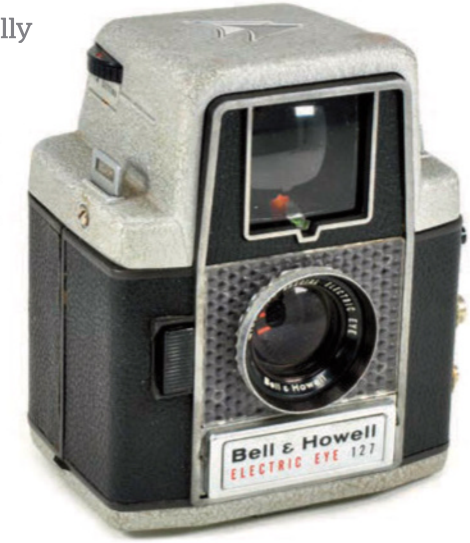

Bell & Howell
ELECTRIC EYE 127

The Bell & Howell Electric Eye 127, which was also known as the Infallible

Bell & Howell was most famous for its cine cameras, and this still camera adopted technology from the Electric Eye Autoset movie models. It's an attractive little camera with a satin-finish die-cast aluminium body covered partly in black leather-grained plastic, measuring 11x9x7cm, weighing 600 grams and shooting 12 4x4cm pictures on 127 film.

The lens is surrounded by what appears to be a selenium meter cell that's actually a piece of bevelled plastic purely for decoration. The real cell is inside the viewfinder, behind the eyepiece and with a gap in its centre that the photographer is unaware of looking through when holding the camera to the eye.

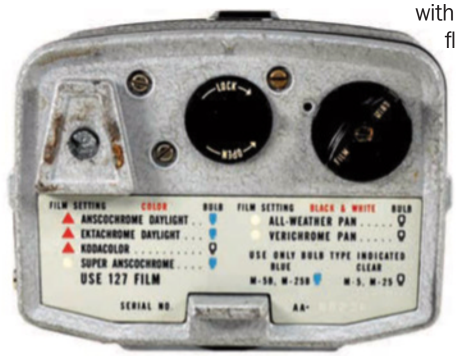
A small thumbwheel beside the viewfinder gives a choice of settings for medium and fast films. Then, with the shutter speed fixed, apertures are set automatically between the lens's two elements. Light shining on the meter cell generates a current that is fed to a miniature voltmeter which rotates a gear linked to two overlapping slotted discs. Each slot is tapered from wide at one end to narrow at the other. Their movement coincides to produce an aperture through which the image is recorded on the film. The usual result is a correctly exposed picture, but only when a small green flag appears in the viewfinder. If the flag shows red, light levels are too low to shoot and flash is recommended.

The camera was originally sold with its own dedicated flashgun, which attaches to the side. Flipping up the name plate on the front of the body reveals a sliding control used to change the aperture according to subject distance when flash is used, or can also be used without flash as a crude form of manual exposure control.

All of this, however, came at a price when you consider the nearly £25 cost of the Electric Eye compared to a Brownie 127 which, in the same year, had a price tag of £1 4s 5d.

What's good Solidly built, extra large viewfinder, easy to use, still working.

What's bad Fixed shutter speed, no apertures indicated on the flash distance setting.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FILM
WIND
FILM SETTING COLOR BULB
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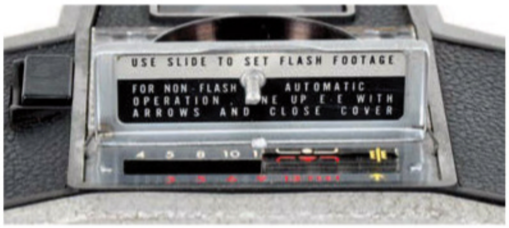
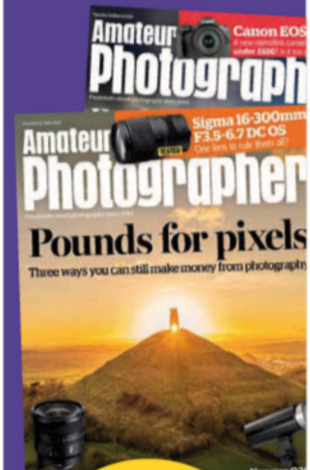
USE 127 FILM
FILM SETTING BLACK & WHITE BULB
ALL-WEATHER PAN
VERICHROME PAN
USE ONLY BULB TYPE INDICATED
BLUE
CLEAR
M-5B, M-25B
M-5, M-25
SERIAL NO.
AA-

On the base of the camera, usable film types are shown, plus recommended flashbulbs


USE SLIDE TO SET FLASH FOOTAGE
FOR NON-FLASH OPERATION, LINE UP E-E WITH ARROWS AND CLOSE COVER
AUTOMATIC
4 5 8 10

The sliding control for flash found under the nameplate



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LETTER OF THE WEEK

Go large

Rannoch Moor

© PETE BRYAN

Praise for David Clapp's feature on large format (AP 17 June). Using large-format field cameras is a fantastic experience that everyone should try. They make you work in a completely different way to 35mm. David mentioned the slower and more deliberate approach to photography this format demands, but what can't be underestimated is the way it makes you really think hard about what to shoot and where from. No more plonking down the tripod in the first spot you get to; you really feel the need to make every shot count, and your compositions improve as a result.

Whilst often frustrating, particularly when trying to get that perfect plane of focus, there's an unbeatable buzz that you get from a big, well-exposed Velvia transparency on your lightbox at the end of the process. I grew to love the fact that the image is upside down and back-to-front on the camera's big ground-glass viewing screen – as soon as you stop trying to view the image the right way round, you surrender to seeing an 'abstract' image in front of your eyes where you can see the arrangement of lines and shapes without the distraction of the actual subject matter. That aided my landscape compositions no end, and even today I even find myself wishing that my 35mm digital camera had a button to flip the image on the LCD screen to get the same effect!

Also like David, I exclusively used medium format 120 film backs rather than full-size individual sheet film; it makes a slow and costly process quite a bit faster and slightly less ruinously expensive. I've sent in one of my images (above).

Pete Bryan

LETTER OF THE WEEK WINS A SAMSUNG 256GB PRO PLUS MICRO SDXC CARD. PLEASE NOTE: ANY WINNERS WHO LIVE OUTSIDE THE UK MAY BE LIABLE FOR THEIR COUNTRY'S IMPORT DUTIES AND COSTS

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Paul (from a Minox repair firm) alerts readers of increased US taxes

More US taxes

From last week, any items sent to the US will incur additional duties paid by the sender. For example, an item with £50 value will have a £5 tariff and £1.50 admin fee, a £10 item has a £1 tariff and £1.50 fee.

This is on all goods, irrespective of type.

The percentage is taken from the description of the good's value in the customs form. So for used cameras and lenses, eBay will add the tax on automatically, and the post office will charge you when you send it.

As a repair business (Minox cameras) where many repairs go to the US, this will increase our costs. Note that these tariffs are in addition to whatever the US customs will charge on arrival.

Paul O'Sullivan, MS Hobbies

Thanks, Paul. Those readers who sell goods on auction sites like eBay may wish to consider whether they still wish to sell to US buyers in the light of this information.

Peak photography

Just a quick shout to the High Peak Photography Club. I'm not a member of any camera club, and I've never taken part in a 'live' photo competition before, but a recent visit to Buxton coincided with their annual Buxton Photography Challenge.

What a well-run and friendly group they are. From the first introduction, to how the day will run, through to the photos – it was a total delight.

Taking part stretched what little skills I have but made me think, observe and push my camera more, and even talk to other photographers – not bad for a £5 entry fee.

All involved gave up their time on a Saturday to promote photography and their local town.

Is this something that other clubs could try? It could even bring some new members in.

Robert Mann

THIS WEEK WE ASKED...

Ever tried vintage or quirky lenses? Which one, and how did it go?

Richard Krawiec
Nikkor 135mm F2 DC and 50mm F1.4… I have two adapters so I can use them on my Lumix S5II or Fuji X-T5* (*they then become 210mm and 75mm respectively).

Chris Protopapas
I had a 1936 Zeiss Biogon 35mm F2.8 for my Nikon rangefinder, it was an amazingly sharp lens.

rob lay @Thurrock0rob
Hanimex 135mm 1:3.5 film camera lens on a Canon 70D with M42 adapter.

Mark Passmore
All my EF lenses could be considered vintage, as I can't afford to upgrade to RF glass. I've a soft spot for my Canon 50mm F1.4 & Sigma 500mm F4.5 lenses though.

Blimey, it's him again! @oldbearchris
Loving my Nikkor 85mm F2 from the 1970s. It's as small as a 50mm prime.

Adrian Wyatt
Still trying to use the normal ones properly!

Dogweather @robert_shecter
M42 is an interesting obsession.

Ben Burchell
I own quite a lot of vintage or old lenses. The two quirkiest ones I own are a Helios 44 which produces a swirly bokeh under certain conditions, and I also have a Fujinon 55mm F2.2 lens which produces a bubble bokeh effect wide open.

David Mill
I own 20 of them, mostly across Pentax K, M42 and Minolta SR mounts. The quirkiest I own are the Helios 44-M (58mm F2), the Minolta MC Rokkor 58mm F1.4 and the Canon FD 100mm F4 Macro. If you have a mirrorless camera I urge you to try one. A standard 50mm F1.8 isn't expensive and adapters are cheap. They offer a different colour rendition and the bokeh can be fun too.

Hugh Maxwell Photography
I regularly use vintage lenses from the mid 1980s with my Pentax 645Z, and the results are fantastic. I use the SMC Pentax-A 35mm F3.5, 45-85mm F4.5 and 80-160mm F4.5. All are manual focus which is perfect for landscapes and they've saved me a lot of money. An image of a waterfall taken with the 45-85mm lens was commended in the landscape category of Scottish Landscape Photographer of the Year 2024. Not bad for a lens purchased for almost nothing through a well-known camera shop.

Share your photos and comments with us on social!
See page 3 for how to contact us

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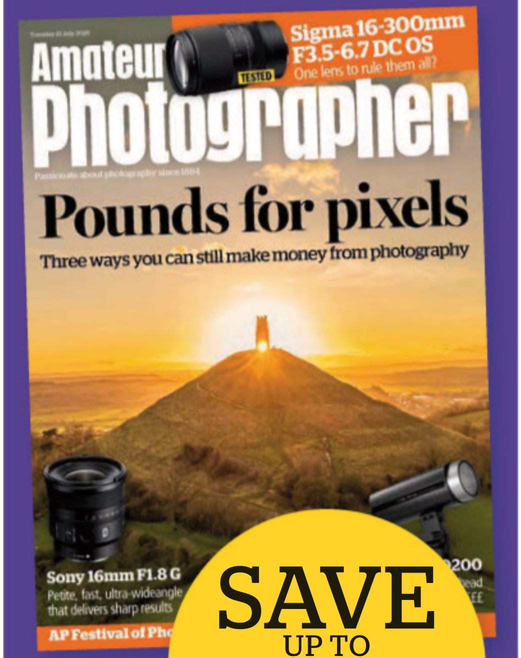
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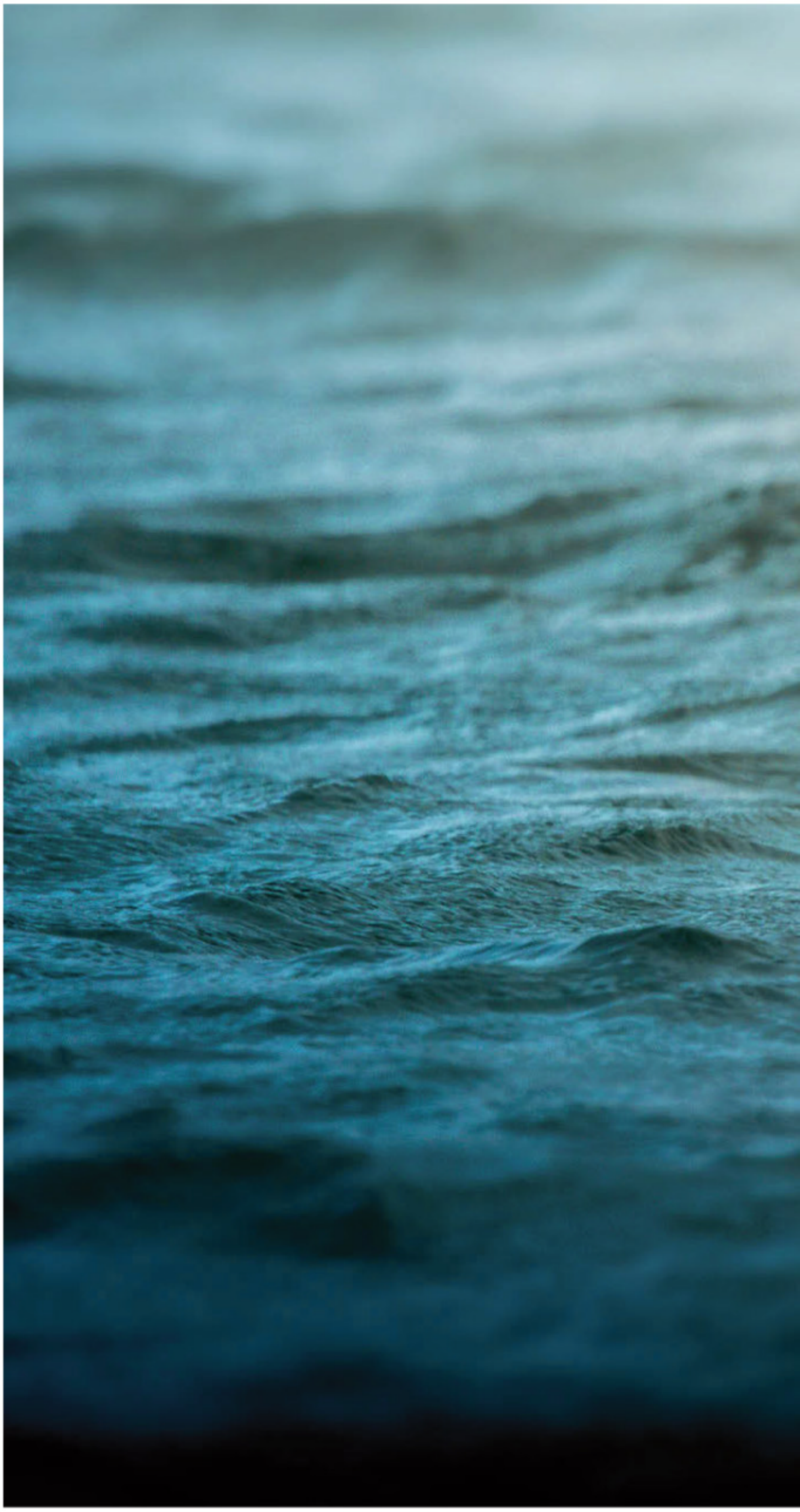


Seal in the Spotlight

by Serkan Hussein

Canon EOS R6 II, Canon RF 100-500mm F4.5-7.1 L IS USM at 500mm, 1/2500sec at f/7.1, ISO 1600

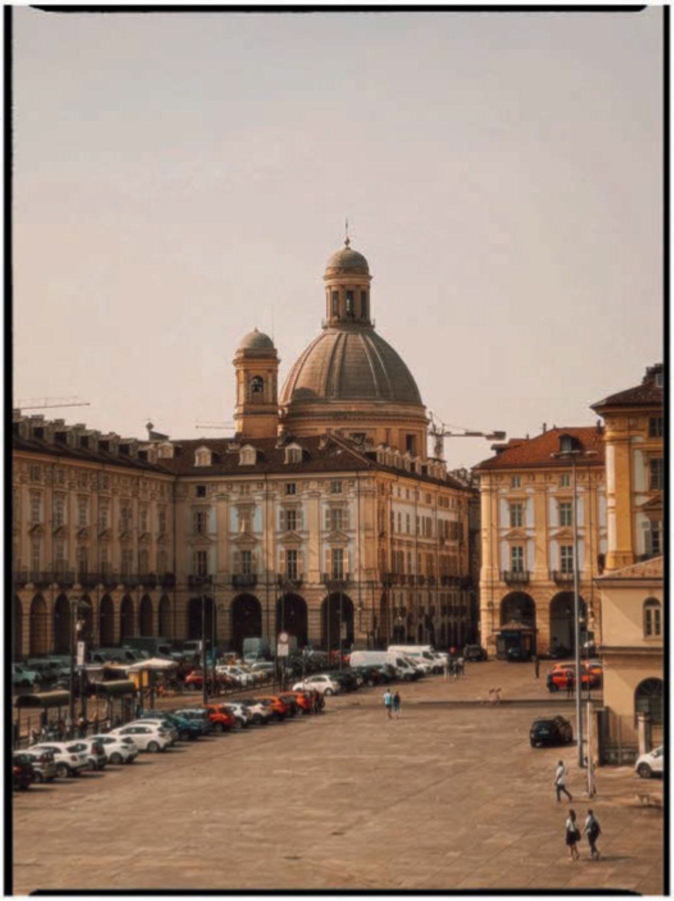
'We left the harbour for Blakeney Point, in Norfolk, but rough seas kept us from approaching the shoreline. In calmer waters, grey seals popped up everywhere, darting between the afternoon light. It was a thrill to be among them, and patience paid off when one finally surfaced long enough for me to capture this shot.'

Instagram: @snappyserks

A Quiet Sunday Morning
by Tamara Sillo

iPhone 16 Pro, ISO 64, 120mm

'This is Piazza della Repubblica – also called Porta Palazzo – on a quiet Sunday morning. During the week in this place there is the biggest open-air market in Europe, and many tourists come and visit it. In the photo you can also see the dome of the Basilica Mauriziana.'
Instagram: @00tams00
Facebook and X: Tamara Sillo



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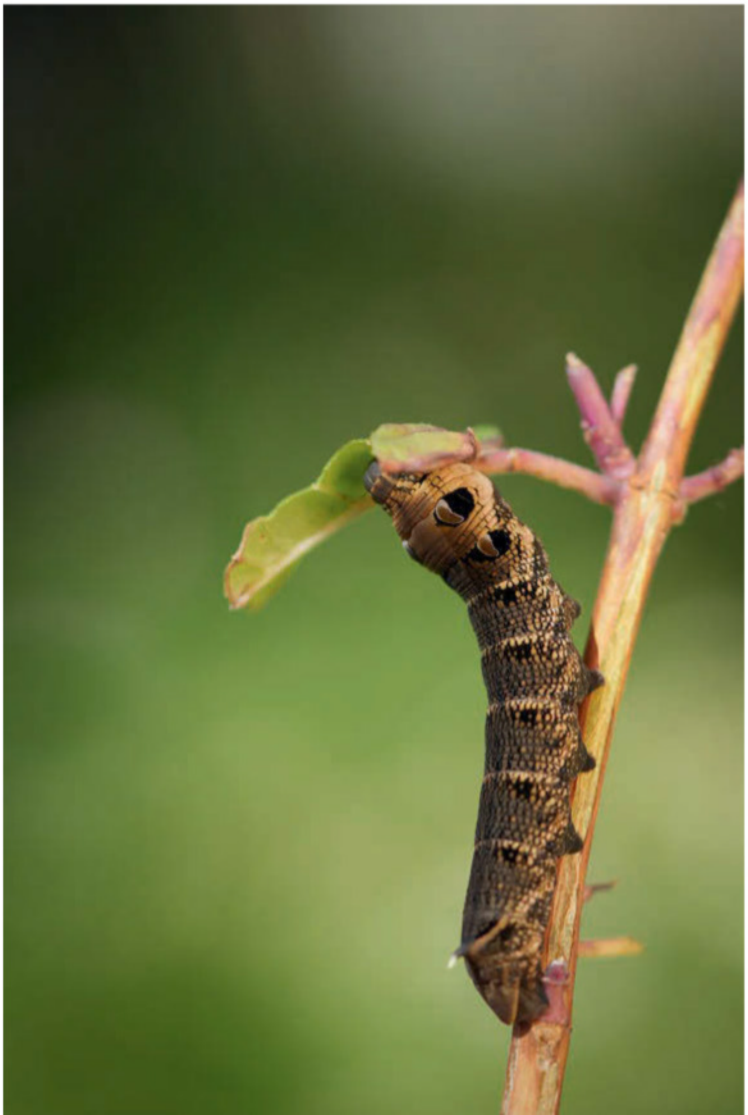

We also liked...

Hungry Caterpillar
by Natalie Stott

Sony A6700, 90mm, 1/800sec at f/2.8, ISO 100

'I captured this shot in my garden near Stamford on a sunny afternoon, when I noticed a hawk-moth caterpillar resting on one of my plants. It lingered long enough for me to take a few photos, with the lush green around it forming the perfect backdrop.'
Instagram: @natalielizabethphotography

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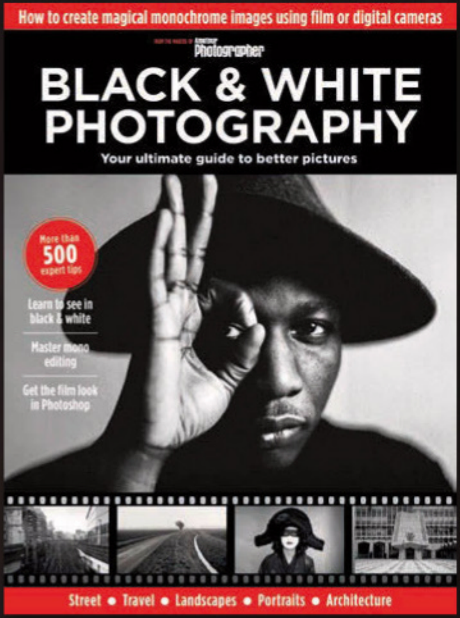
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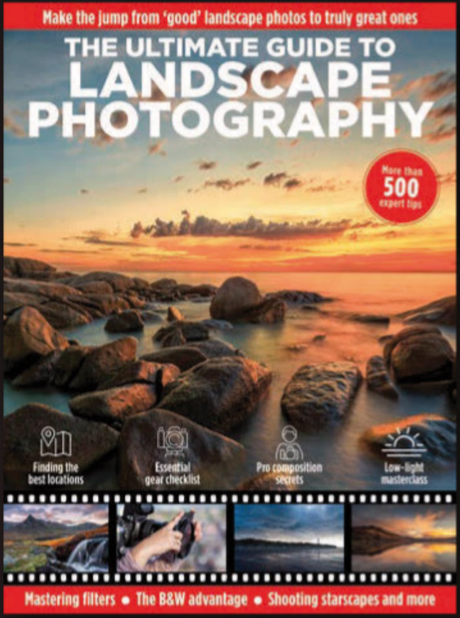
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1 Going Down by Alastair Chalmers

2 Lions in a Tree by Jeremy Richards

3 Black-necked Grebes with Young by Greg Lovett

1

2

3

Join the Club

Bath Photographic Society has a varied programme and links with a club in the USA

When was the club founded?
1888.

What does your club offer to new members?
New members are encouraged to try us out before fully joining and paying subscriptions. They can visit up to three or four times as a guest to get a flavour of the club.

Describe a typical club meeting
Over a month we will typically have a guest presenter, a talk from one of our members, a competition night, a members' night, which might be a practical or how-to session. We often show an international salon or smaller national competitions (some of which our members will have submitted work to – and often they do very well). Most of our talks are on Zoom so people can take part at home or attend in person. The society meets every Tuesday evening from 7.30pm to 9.30pm. There is a break for a drink halfway through with notices and a raffle before commencing the second half.

Do you invite guest speakers?
Yes we do. Most speakers attend in person but we also have some presentations over Zoom. So far this society year, guest speakers have presented talks on abandoned architecture, wildlife photography and eclectic images.

Do members compete in regional or national competitions?
Yes, members successfully compete in local photographic federation competitions, Royal Photographic Society competitions and national and international salons.

How many members do you have?
Currently we have approximately 60 members. We are particularly

proud that so many of our members have different photographic interests and genres including wildlife, street, abstract, landscape, composites, travel, photo essays etc. Some of our members still use film while others use mobile phones to capture their competition-winning images.

Are any residential trips or outings planned?

Some of our members have just visited the Bristol Light Festival. Later this year we have several trips planned for evening meetings. Members often visit Salisbury Plain when it's open to the public twice every year. Several members regularly photograph Larkhall Athletic Football Club and a number of amateur rugby teams. Groups of members have holidayed together and visited more local destinations including Weston-super-Mare and Slimbridge.

Do you have any funny stories about the club?

Our past president has just completed a history book about the club, which is due to be published soon. Various funny stories have emerged from the research for this book including one member way back in the '50s (whose name is withheld!) who used to vote for himself in competitions.

What are the club's goals for the future?

Our goals as established in 1888 are for the advancement of photographic art and science. Within this we have maintained an accessible and friendly club and we reach out to our wider communities. Many of our members are active in promoting photography to support local charities.

We have a friendly link with an American photo club (Ridgewood) and we have occasional joint projects and share a lot through Zoom meetings.

Although the club has a long history and we want to respect that, we know we can't rest on our laurels. We're taking steps to ensure the club has a sustainable future – we're modernising and moving with the times.

To be as inclusive as possible we've devised a mobile phone competition and a few members are recreating a short 1950s film about the club but using modern techniques such as mobile phones and sound!

We have refreshed our website and are active on social media to reach a new younger audience. So do look out for us on there.

4

4 Savernake Forest in the Mist by Greg Lovett

5 Looking Right by David Nicholson

6 White-fronted Bee Eater with Catch by Jeremy Richards

Club essentials

Bath Photographic Society

St Stephen's Church Crypt, Lansdown Road, Bath, BA11 5XS

Meets: We meet once a week on a Tuesday evening at 7.30pm in St Stephen's Crypt, Lansdown Road, Bath

Membership fee: Membership is £66 per year for the first family member (reduced by half for the second) with an optional additional amount if people want to take part in the raffle (to win a bottle of wine).

Contact: Club secretary, via bathphotographic@outlook.com

Website: www.bathphotographicsociety.org.uk

11

12

THE
BOROUGH
MARKET
KITCHE

5

6

7

8

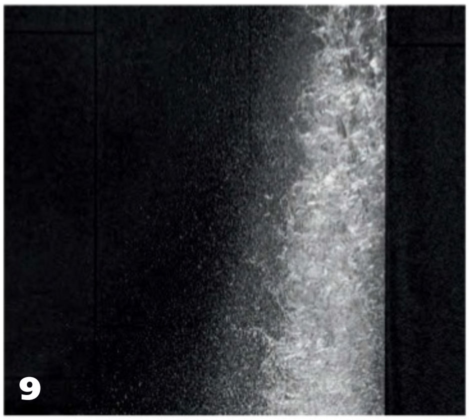
9 Waterfall by Philip Dean

10 Bull African Elephant Dusting by Jeremy Richards

11 Where the Bee Sucks by Alastair Chalmers

12 Headstones by Shay Parsons

13 Riding the Wave by Mike Hendon



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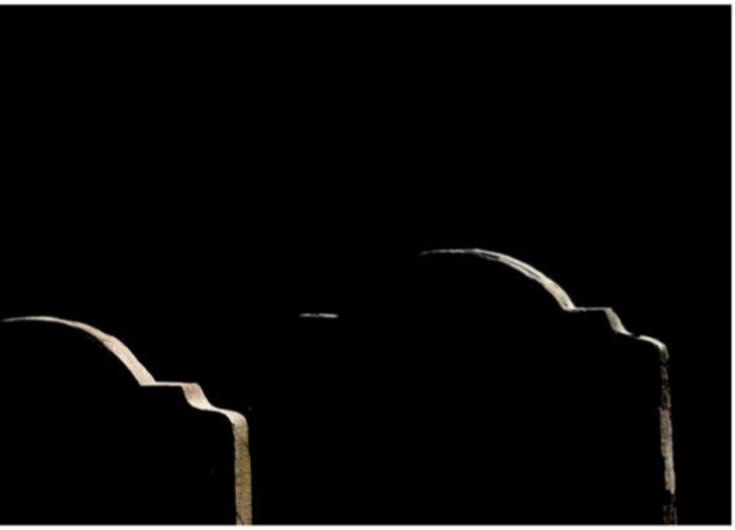
7 African Wildcat Hunting Doves by Jeremy Richards

8 Lyme Regis by Jon Taylor

10



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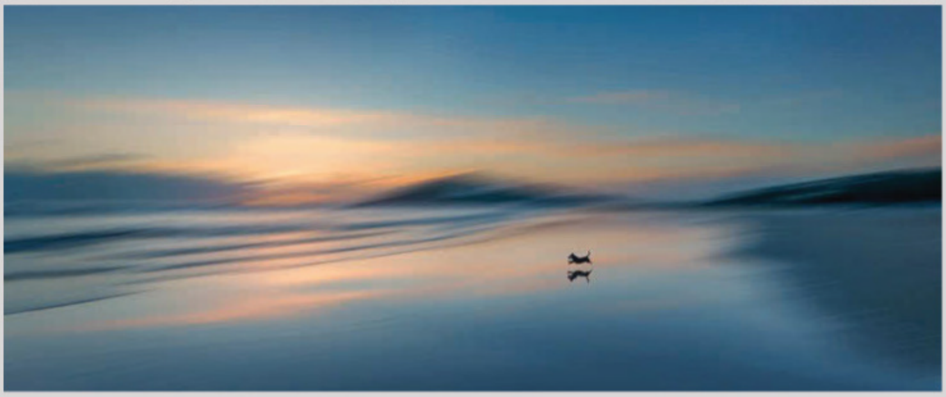

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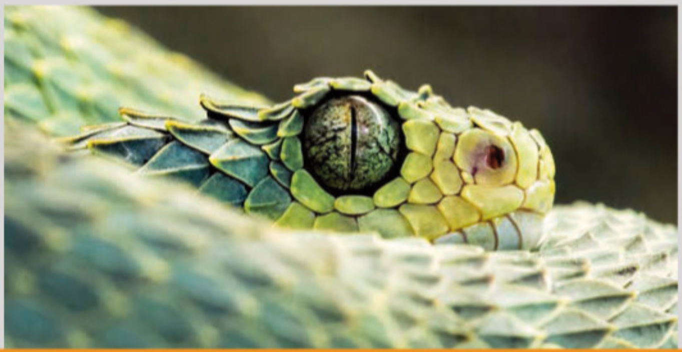

BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: © ROY EGLOFF; © NEIL GRIEVE OF TRURO CAMERA CLUB; © ASHLEY FOUNTAIN

Visit www.amateurphotographer.com/apoy

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A round-up of the AP testing team's favourite and most highly rated kit, including both cameras and all kinds of accessories, across a wide range of price points

OM System Tough TG-7

● £449 ● explore.omsystem.com

This latest model in a long line of class-leading rugged cameras is waterproof to 15m, shockproof against a 2.1m drop, crushproof and freezeproof. The 25-100mm equivalent lens is paired with a 12MP sensor, with in-body stabilisation to combat shake. Viewing is via a 3in LCD. The TG-7 is also one of the few cameras of its type that can record raw files.

★★★★☆ **Reviewed 2 Apr 2024**

OM SYSTEM
TG-7

Canon PowerShot G7 X Mark III

● £849 ● www.canon.co.uk

This lovely little pocket camera provides a good range of features for both photography and video. You get a 20MP 1in sensor, 24-100mm equivalent f/1.8-2.8 zoom lens, 4K 30p video recording, and a tilting rear screen. It's ideal for those who'd like more advanced controls than on a smartphone.

★★★★☆ **Reviewed 28 Sep 2019**

Fujifilm X100VI

● £1,599 ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk

The sixth version of Fujifilm's charismatic rangefinder-styled compact boasts a 40MP APS-C sensor in front of its fixed 23mm f/2 lens. It also gains in-body stabilisation while barely increasing in size. Traditional analogue control dials are joined by a unique hybrid optical/electronic viewfinder and a tilting touchscreen on the back. It's a truly fabulous camera.

★★★★★

Reviewed 9 Apr 2024

Ricoh GR III

● £949 ● ricohgr.eu/en-gb

A favourite of street photographers, the GR III combines a 24MP APS-C sensor and a sharp 28mm equivalent f/2.8 lens in a slim, pocketable body. It offers sensitivities up to ISO 102,400 and 4fps shooting, while in-body image stabilisation helps keeps image sharp. Viewing is via a fixed 3in rear LCD or an optional optical viewfinder that slots onto the hot shoe.

★★★★☆

Reviewed 3 Aug 2019

Sony RX100 VII

● £1,050 ● www.sony.co.uk

Sony has somehow crammed a 24-200mm equivalent zoom, pop-up electronic viewfinder, tilting screen, 20 fps shooting and 4K video recording into a body that you can slip into a jacket pocket. With the firm's latest AF technology also on board, it's without doubt the most accomplished pocket camera on the market.

★★★★½

Reviewed 5 Oct 2019

Sony RX10 IV

● £1,500 ● www.sony.co.uk

This sets a new standard for superzoom cameras, with a 24-600mm equivalent lens, 20MP 1in sensor, and 24 fps continuous shooting. Its SLR-shaped body hosts a large electronic viewfinder and a decent set of physical controls. It's the best all-in-one camera for wildlife or travel photography that you can buy right now.

★★★★★

Reviewed 2 Dec 2017

SONY
RX10IV

Canon EOS 250D

● £650 with 18-55mm IS lens ● www.canon.co.uk

One of the smallest DSLRs around, the EOS 250D strikes a great balance between portability and usability. It's equipped with a novice-friendly Guided Mode, while Canon's Dual Pixel CMOS sensor provides excellent autofocus in live view. Image quality is very good, delivering vibrant colours and plenty of fine detail.

★★★★☆

Reviewed
7 Sep 2019

Olympus OM-D E-M10 Mark IV

● £749 with 14-42mm ● explore.omsystem.com

With a charismatic retro design, fine handling, highly effective in-body stabilisation and attractive JPEG output, Olympus has made a camera that's more pleasant to use than its entry-level competitors. Its 20MP sensor delivers good results up to ISO 3200 at least, and its tilting screen can be set to face forwards beneath the camera.

OM-D
OLYMPUS

★★★★½

Reviewed
26 Sep 2020

Fujifilm X-T5

● £1,699 body only ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk

Fujifilm's latest X-T model is a great choice for serious enthusiast photographers. It boasts a 40MP APS-C sensor housed in a retro-styled body covered with traditional analogue control dials. Subject-detection autofocus, in-body stabilisation and Fujifilm's lovely colour modes round off an extremely desirable package.

FUJIFILM
X-T5

★★★★★

Reviewed
3 Jan 2023

Canon EOS R50

● £899 with 15-45mm lens ● www.canon.co.uk

With the EOS R50, Canon has fitted some impressive technology into a compact and lightweight body. It boasts highly capable subject recognition autofocus coupled with rapid continuous shooting. Image quality is very pleasing too, with attractive files direct from the camera. It also works well with EF-mount DSLR lenses.

★★★★☆

Reviewed
6 Jun 2023

Fujifilm X-T30 II

● £899 with 15-45mm lens ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk

This lovely little camera provides excellent performance, while preserving the charm and charisma of the X-series. It's a great all-rounder, and handles exceptionally well thanks to an intuitive interface based around traditional analogue dials. Image quality is superb in both raw and JPEG, aided by Fujifilm's peerless Film Simulation modes.

FUJIFILM
X-T30

★★★★★

Reviewed
8 Feb 2022

Panasonic Lumix GH7

● £1,999 body only ● www.panasonic.com/uk

Panasonic's flagship Micro Four Thirds camera is aimed at videographers, but holds its own when capturing stills as well. Its 25MP sensor delivers plenty of detail, while enabling 5.7K recording at 60fps, or 4K at 120fps. Autofocus is much improved over the firm's older models, too. Pro-spec video functionality and effective in-body stabilisation round off a fine package.

★★★★★

Reviewed
5 Nov 2024

Fujifilm X-S20

● £1,249 body only ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk

Styled like a mini DSLR, the X-S20 uses electronic dials for changing exposure settings, as opposed to the X-T series' analogue controls. But you still get Fujifilm's signature fine image quality, along with in-body image stabilisation. It also boasts an array of advanced video features, making it a great choice for vloggers and photographers alike.

FUJIFILM
X-S20

★★★★★

Reviewed
25 Jul 2023

Panasonic Lumix G9 II

● £1,699 body only ● www.panasonic.com/uk

Panasonic's high-end Micro Four Thirds camera provides an impressive set of features. It can shoot 25MP still images at up to 75fps, and 5.7K video at 60fps. You get an excellent control layout, incredibly effective in-body stabilisation, and very capable subject recognition autofocus. A good range of small, excellent Leica-branded lenses is available to match.

★★★★★

Reviewed
31 Oct 2023

OM System OM-1 Mark II

● £2,199 body only ● explore.omsystem.com

Updated version of this high-speed powerhouse gains some handy new features. It's capable of shooting at 120fps with focus fixed, or 50fps with AF, but now with double the buffer for extended bursts. AI subject detection recognises vehicles, animals and birds. It also boasts IP53-rated weather-sealing and includes class-leading stabilisation.

OM SYSTEM
OM-1

★★★★★

Review
12 Mar 2024

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Trustpilot ★★★★★ 4.9
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Nikon Z6III

● £2,499 body only ● www.nikon.co.uk

This mid-range model is one of the finest all-round cameras for enthusiast users on the market. It marries excellent autofocus and super-fast continuous shooting with solid build quality and a refined control layout. The viewfinder is particularly bright, and joined by a fully articulated touchscreen. It's at least a match for any other camera in its class.

★★★★★

Reviewed
8 Oct 2024

Sony Alpha 7 IV

● £2,399 body only ● www.sony.co.uk

Sony's latest enthusiast-focused full-frame mirrorless model sets a new standard in its class. Its 33MP full-frame sensor delivers excellent image quality, and it can shoot at up to 10fps. Its practically foolproof subject-detection AF can now recognise birds as well as humans and animals. A large, clear viewfinder and fully articulated touchscreen round off the package.

★★★★★

Reviewed
11 Dec 2021

Nikon D780

● £1,999 body only ● www.nikon.co.uk

This highly accomplished 24MP full-frame model shows that there's life in the DSLR yet. It's superbly built with extensive weather sealing, handles brilliantly, and gives excellent results in any conditions. It'll provide top-level service to photographers who want to keep using their F-mount lenses and still prefer an optical viewfinder.

★★★★★

Reviewed
4 Apr 2020

Nikon Z 7II

● £2,499 body only ● www.nikon.co.uk

Nikon has delivered a sensible update to its flagship high-res model, with an additional SD card slot and slightly faster shooting. As before, its 45.7MP sensor gives stunning image quality, backed up by 5-axis in-body image stabilisation and fast, accurate autofocus. The viewfinder is superb, and F-mount SLR lenses can be used via the FTZ adapter.

★★★★½

Reviewed
6 Feb 2021

Nikon Z 9

● £5,299 body only ● www.nikon.co.uk

Without doubt Nikon's finest camera yet, the Z 9 combines high resolution, breathtaking speed, subject-recognition autofocus and pro-level build. It's capable of shooting 45.7MP raw files at 20fps for 1,000 frames, and 11MP JPEGs at 120fps. It can also record 8K video. With its superb viewfinder and tilting rear screen, it's probably the most capable camera around.

★★★★★

Reviewed
22 Mar 2022

Canon EOS R6 Mark II

● £1,999 body only ● www.canon.co.uk

Based around a 24MP full-frame sensor, this brilliant all-rounder will do almost anything you might ask it to. It combines reliable subject-detection AF, rapid continuous shooting, and effective image stabilisation in a body that handles well and gives great results. It also works well with adapted EF-mount DSLR lenses.

★★★★★

Reviewed
21 Mar 2023

Sony Alpha 7R V

● £3,999 body only ● www.sony.co.uk

With its 61MP full-frame sensor, the A7R V provides class-leading image quality while adding a whole array of improvements over its predecessor. These include subject-detection AF, a larger, more detailed viewfinder, and a more flexible rear LCD design. For those whose needs are more about image quality than speed, it's probably the best full-frame camera you can buy.

★★★★★

Reviewed
17 Jan 2023

Leica M11 Monochrom

● £8,300 body only ● uk.leica-camera.com

Within its own specialist niche, this monochrome-only manual-focus rangefinder is almost perfect. Its build quality is stunning, and the pared-back design allows you to immerse yourself completely in the process of taking pictures. Most importantly, the 60.1MP sensor produces fantastic results, reaching a new pinnacle in black & white image quality.

★★★★★

Reviewed
16 May 2023

Fujifilm GFX100 II

● £6,999 body only ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk

Fujifilm's latest super-high resolution medium-format camera places an updated 102MP sensor in a pro-spec modular body. Subject-detection autofocus is on board for animals, birds and vehicles, while in-body image stabilisation helps keep handheld shots sharp. It's the ideal camera for serious photographers who demand the ultimate in image quality.

★★★★★

Reviewed
21 Nov 2023

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Tenba DNA 9 Slim Messenger

● £110 ● uk.tenba.com

If you'd like a small shoulder bag to carry a camera and a couple of lenses, this is among the best you'll find. Measuring 28cm wide by 20cm tall, it's well suited to holding a mirrorless camera or a compact DSLR. The quality of materials and construction is excellent, and there are plenty of handy pockets for organising accessories.

★★★★★ **Reviewed 26 Apr 2022**

Vanguard Veo Select 46BR

● £120 ● www.vanguardworld.co.uk

This backpack is capable of swallowing a substantial amount of kit while retaining a travel-friendly 28cm slim profile. An array of access points allow you to get at your kit from the back, top or either side. It's capable of holding a full-frame DSLR with 4-6 lenses along with a 13in laptop.

★★★★★

Reviewed 6 Jul 2019

Wandrd Prvke 31

● £279 (photography bundle) ● eu.wandrd.com

This spacious backpack offers an excellent combination of uncluttered style, rugged construction and a selection of genuinely useful pockets. The roll-close top section is the icing on the cake that always seems to allow just one more item to be squeezed in. Crucially, it's comfortable to carry over long distances.

★★★★★ **Reviewed 11 Sep 2021**

NiSi NM-180 Macro Rail

● £105 ● www.nisioptics.co.uk

Arguably the best macro focusing rail available right now, the NM-180 combines excellent quality build with super-smooth operation. It's easily capable of supporting a full-frame SLR while offering up to 130mm of travel, with a fold-out handle providing fine adjustment. It also boasts extensive compatibility with the Arca Swiss quick release system, with a dovetail profile along its base and a rotating clamp on top.

★★★★★

Reviewed 24 Oct 2020

Cullmann Rondo 460M RB8.5

● £75 ● www.transcontinenta.co.uk/cullmann

If you want a fully featured tripod kit on a budget, this is a great choice. Four-section aluminium legs provide a max height of 160cm, while packing down to 43.5cm. It's rated to support a 4kg load, weighs 1.46kg, and one leg can be combined with the centre column to form a monopod.

★★★★½

Reviewed 21 Mar 2020

MeFOTO RoadTrip PRO

● £225 ● uk.benroeu.com

Few tripods come close to matching this one for sheer versatility. It extends to 152.5cm, folds down to 38.5cm and weighs 1.37kg. One leg can be detached for use as a monopod or boom arm, and there's even a small desktop stand stowed inside the centre column. It's sturdy enough to support a full-frame mirrorless set-up.

★★★★★

Reviewed 12 Apr 2022

Benro Rhino 24C tripod with VX25 head

● £250 ● uk.benroeu.com

Benro has got pretty much everything right with this sturdy, well-designed tripod and head that'll support a substantial load. This four-section carbon fibre model offers a maximum height of almost 1.7m, while folding down to 49cm and weighing 1.74kg. It's easily capable of supporting a full-frame DSLR with a telephoto zoom. Quite simply, it's a fantastic kit for the money.

★★★★★ **Reviewed 28 Nov 2020**

NiSi True Color ND-Vario 1-5 stops

● £89-£189 ● www.nisioptics.co.uk

This high-quality variable neutral density filter is ideal for regulating the amount of light entering your lens, without introducing any colour cast. It's optically excellent, boasts an oil and water-repellent coating, and includes a handy and accurate density scale. It's available in sizes from 40.5mm to 95mm.

★★★★★

Reviewed 24 May 2022

Benro SupaDupa Pro MSDPL46C

● £190 ● uk.benroeu.com

It may have a ridiculous name, but this five-section carbon fibre model might just be the best monopod we've ever tested. One clip leg lock provides easy length adjustment, while the lower twist locks are waterproof. On the top there's a clever bowl head with an Arca-compatible clamp. It's a great choice for those who regularly shoot with large telephotos.

★★★★★

Reviewed 24 Apr 2021

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Nissin i40

● £159 ● www.kenro.co.uk

A compact flashgun that's designed for mirrorless cameras, the i40 stands out for its high specification, compact size and ease of use. Its auto-zoom head covers lenses from 24-105mm equivalent. With a powerful output that belies its size, and a built-in LED video light, it's available for most brands of camera.

★★★★★

Reviewed
3 May 2014

RØDE Wireless Go II

● £309 ● en.rode.com

RØDE's compact wireless system makes it easier than ever to get high-quality audio for video recording. This dual-channel wireless mic kit includes two transmitter units and a receiver (a single-transmitter set is also available for £200). Key features include built-in rechargeable batteries lasting up to 7 hours, onboard backup recording, and up to 200m range.

★★★★★

Reviewed
15 May 2021

Hahnel ProCube2

● £80 ● www.hahnel.ie

This dual battery charger boasts a sturdy metal shell and interchangeable plates that each accept a pair of batteries. An LCD display shows progress, and a 2.4A USB output allows phones or tablets to be charged once the camera batteries are full. Versions are available for all the main camera brands.

★★★★★

Reviewed
24 Feb 2018

Datacolor SpyderX Pro

● £159 ● www.datacolor.com

If you like to post-process your images, you need to be sure that your monitor is showing colours accurately. Datacolor has designed the SpyderX to calibrate your display faster than ever before, with the process taking about two minutes. For most photographers the Pro package makes most sense.

★★★★★

Reviewed 6 Apr 2019

Rotolight NEO 3

● £549 (Ultimate Kit) ● www.rotolight.com

LED lighting technology has advanced in leaps and bounds over recent years. Rotolight's compact on-camera NEO 3 offers a unique feature set thanks to its full colour RGBWW LEDs, with the ability to provide either continuous light or flash in 16.7 million colours. This firm has also programmed in the characteristics of 2,500 colour filters. Power is provided by an NP-F type Li-ion battery.

★★★★½

Reviewed
5 Apr 2022

Hoya Ultra-Pro Circular Polariser

● £47-£179 ● www.holdan.co.uk

Hoya's premium range of circular polarisers is available in 13 sizes from 37mm to 82mm. These filters feature 16 layers of anti-reflective coatings, high transmission, and are designed to repel water and oil while being scratch and stain resistant. An ultra-thin aluminium frame prevents vignetting when used with wideangle lenses.

★★★★★

Reviewed
3 Mar 2018

Kase Wolverine K9 100mm Entry-Level Kit

● £385 ● www.kasefilters.com

With this top-quality filter system, Kase has carefully rethought every component. The slimline, low-profile holder benefits from extensive light-sealing, while the 82mm polariser clips into place magnetically; it's also easy to adjust from behind the camera. All of the filters use top-quality glass, and everything fits together into a single case. The result is a top-quality set-up that's easy to use and delivers superb results.

★★★★★

Reviewed
5 Dec 2020

Intrepid Compact Enlarger

● £280 ● www.intrepidcamera.co.uk

For film photography enthusiasts wishing to make prints at home, this compact and affordable unit includes lots of handy features. Based around full-colour LED technology, it supports both mono and colour printing. It's perfect for those who don't have space for a permanent darkroom.

★★★★★

Reviewed
17 Jul 2021

Fujifilm Instax Link WIDE

● £140 ● www.instax.co.uk

This brilliant portable printer produces great-looking 6x10cm prints on Fujifilm's Instax Wide film. It connects to your smartphone via Bluetooth and is controlled using an attractively designed and intuitive app. Powered by a built-in rechargeable battery and available in white or grey, it'll slip easily into a bag.

★★★★★

Reviewed
25 Jan 2022

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★★★★★

"Never seen a camera shop with so many varieties of camera from film to digital, clearly shows a lot of passion and hard work!"

★★★★★

"Very informative the guys really know their stuff. Nothing was too much trouble."

★★★★★

"Quick delivery and great products!"

★★★★★

"Great service as always. My go-to store for all my camera needs."

★★★★★

"Really helpful staff and a fantastic selection of kit. Definitely going back. Still smiling."

★★★★★

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★★★★★

"Great customer service, and would recommend to anyone, thank you guys"

★★★★★

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★★★★★

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★★★★★

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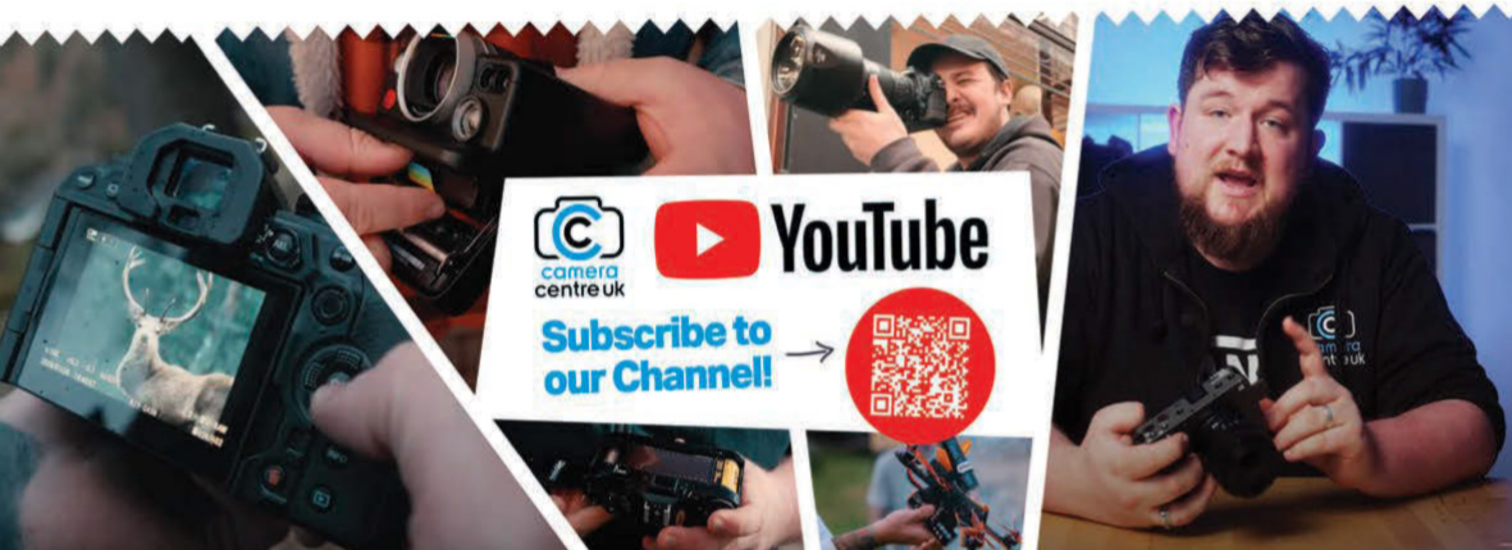

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907276	Canon EF 16-35mm f4L IS USM Lens	**£399**
902529	Canon EF 200mm f2.8L II USM Lens	**£479**
906897	Canon EF 24-105mm f4 L IS II USM Lens	**£699**
907432	Canon EF 24-70mm f2.8L II USM Lens	**£1099**
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907119	Canon EF 40mm f2.8 STM Lens	**£129**
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907546	Fujifilm 50mm f2 R WR XF Lens	**£259**
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907572	Nikon 24-120mm f4G ED VR AF-S Lens	**£299**
907549	Nikon 24mm f1.8G ED AF-S Lens	**£349**
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906967	Nikon 300mm f4E PF AF-S ED VR Lens	**£849**
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905699	Sony 50mm f2.5 G Lens	**£387**
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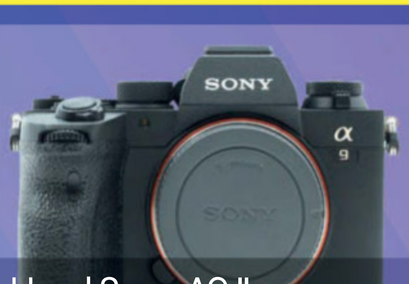

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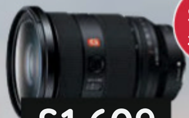

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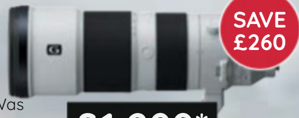

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Final Analysis

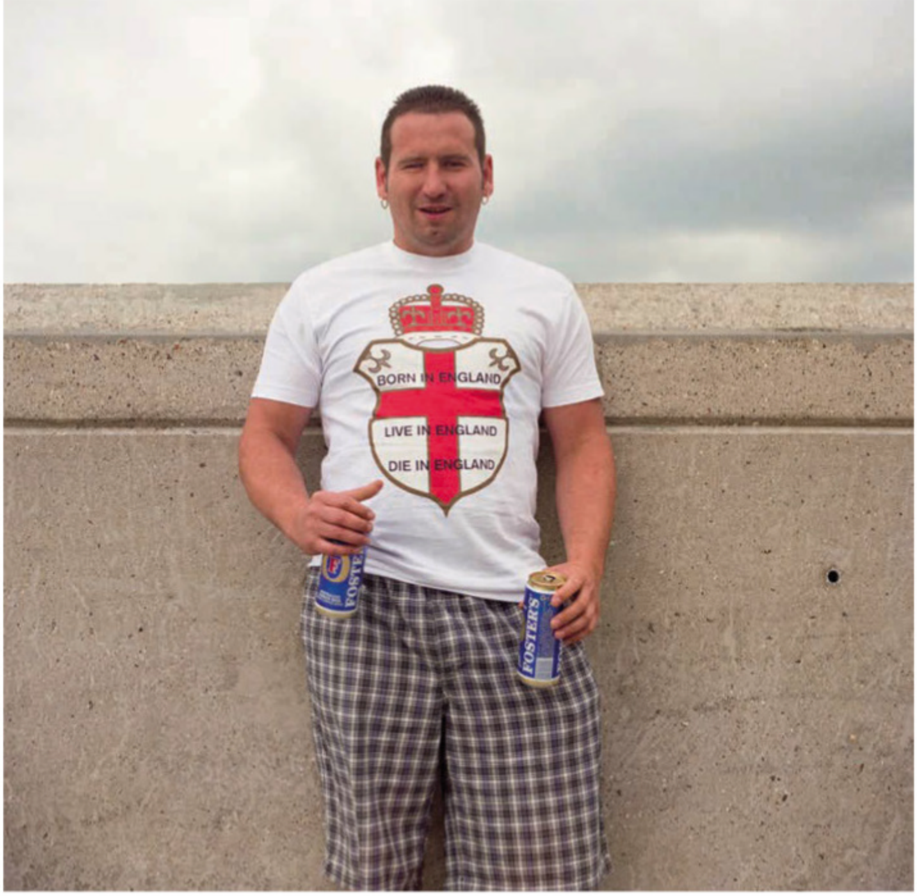
Peter Dench considers...

Wembley Stadium 1996 by Martin Salter from the series Memory Lane

There's something magnificently English about this photograph. The flag of St George transformed into a crest of honour across a snug white T-shirt, bearing the no-nonsense capital-lettered manifesto: Born in England. Live in England. Die in England. It's a bold, possibly beer-fuelled declaration of national pride – made all the more ironic by the fact that this proud Englishman is dual-wielding cans of Fosters, an Australian lager. Not a warm pint of bitter in sight.

The man stands in front of a slab of unyielding concrete beneath a sky the colour of wet kitchen roll, a picture-perfect slice of England's less-than-idyllic reality. His shorts are plaid, his ears pierced, and he's the sort of character you might cross the road to avoid – or strike up a fascinating, half-sober conversation with after two more cans.

Martin Salter's Memory Lane isn't nostalgia, exactly. It's not a sugar-coated stroll through a mythical past. Instead, it's a raw, often bleak, sometimes hilarious look at Britain in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Shot mainly in square format with a Rolleiflex and a discerning eye for the absurd, the work mixes affection with a kind of gentle disbelief. These are the images of a man obsessed with the 'suchness' of things – a nod to the Japanese concept of Mono No Aware that Salter cites. That awareness of beauty, melancholy, and fleetingness runs through this frame.



© MARTIN SALTER

> 'There was consistency, personality, a visual language formed unconsciously but undeniably his'

Rediscovered archive

The series sat dormant for years – over 1,000 rolls of film boxed up and forgotten, as Salter's career shifted into video production. It took a pandemic, an Instagram account, and some help from his daughter to resuscitate the archive. What emerged wasn't just a body of work – it was a revelation. There was consistency, personality, a visual language formed unconsciously but undeniably his.

Salter lists influences from Sternfeld to Arbus, with a respectful nod to Martin Parr – but always with the caveat: the work had to be recognisably his. No flash unless essential. Shoot square. Prefer cloud cover to sunshine. The result is a series that captures Britain's social DNA at a particular moment in time – before smartphones, before Brexit, before Fosters became retro.

Now working as a mentor in the prison service, Salter has long since left behind the commercial rat race of photography. He calls himself a happy amateur and hints at one last fling with a hulking Graflex SLR. But Memory Lane is his golden period, and he knows it.

This photograph might not change the world, but it holds up a cracked mirror to it – showing us how we looked, how we lived, and maybe how we laughed at ourselves, even when we weren't supposed to.

To see more or buy the book www.martinsalterstudio.com/books.

Peter Dench is a photographer, writer, curator and presenter based in London. He is one of the co-curators of Photo North and has been exhibited dozens of times. He has published a number of books including *The Dench Dozen: Great Britons of Photography Vol 1; Dench Does Dallas; The British Abroad; A&E: Alcohol & England* and *England Uncensored*. Visit **peterdench.com**

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